



# THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

25¢

Vol.8 No.2

VETS OF ALL ERAS, CLOSE RANKS!

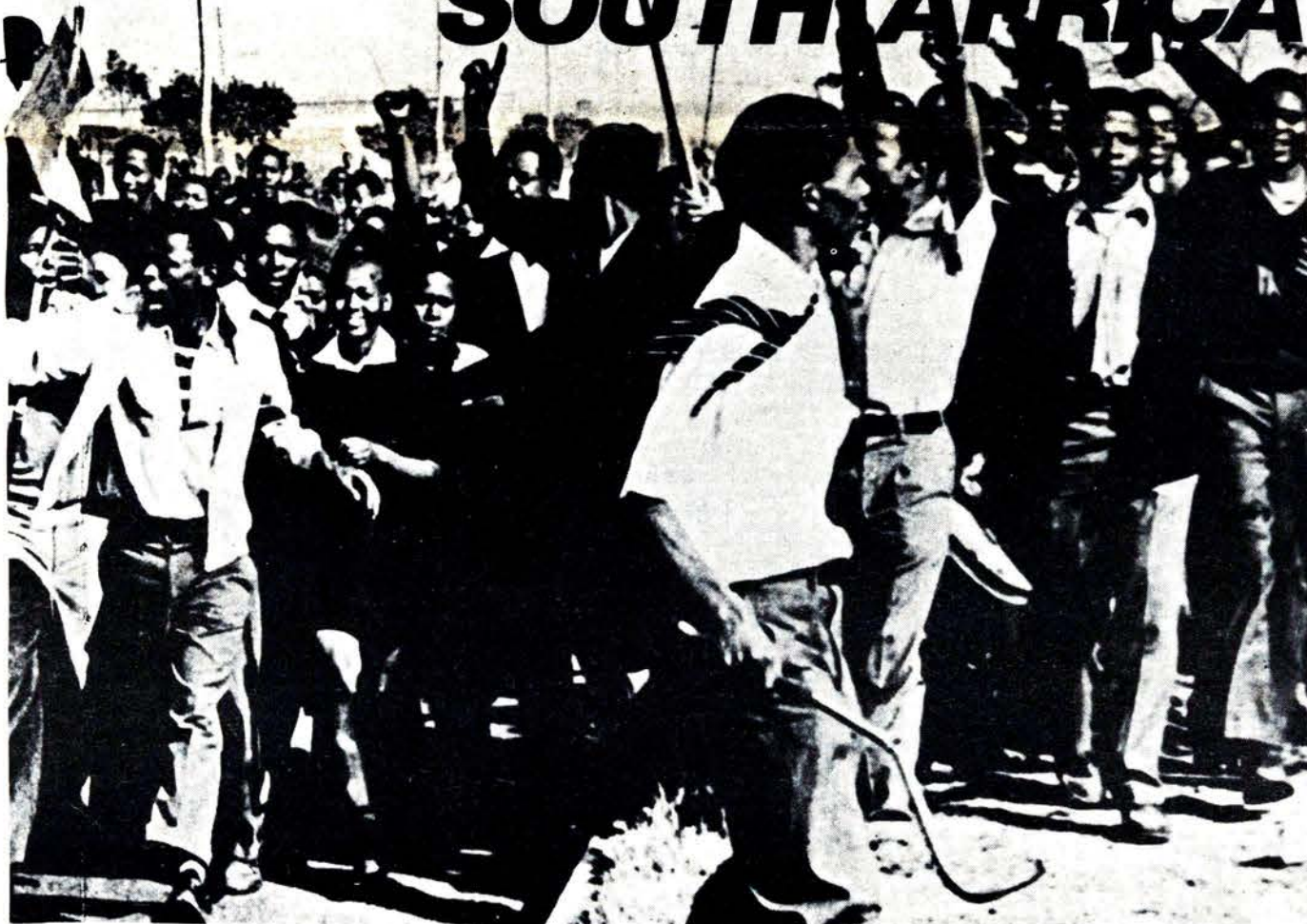
SUMMER 1978

## Defoliant Agent Orange

# CHEMICAL TIME BOMB IN VIETNAM VETERANS

## Azania Explodes

# VICTORY TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH AFRICA



Black South Africans are rising up (as in the picture above) to fight for the freedom and liberation of their country of Azania from white minority rule. Despite incredible repression by the government, which is supported by the mighty U.S. corporations which can milk profits out the slave labor of Black Africans, the people of the country continue their struggle to be free. See centerfold for articles on the struggle of Black people in Azania and in the United States, and how Vietnam Veterans Against the War is building and supporting these struggles.

AGENT ORANGE--the newest outrage faced by Vietnam vets. The powerful defoliant was sprayed all over Vietnam, killing jungles, crops, unborn children--and caused deformities in kids whose mothers were hit by the spray.

Vietnam vets got hit by the same spray--we walked through defoliated areas right after they were sprayed, we mixed the defoliant, we drank the water and flew the planes. And vets are now finding some of the effects of that chemical: skin rashes, numbness in fingers and toes, possible cancer, even deformed children. The chemical can sit in the body for years, then suddenly the effects appear.

Confronted by this new service-connected disability, the Veterans Administration has flip-flopped from "We want to do all we can to help" to "You have to prove that cause and effect are connected." The VA can see the possibilities of having to treat thousands of vets at a time when the bosses who run the country are slicing VA budgets, since healthcare in the VA doesn't make them profits.

Vets are experienced in being used once to fight a rich man's war, and then being tossed aside--the VA's attitude toward AGENT ORANGE merely underlines how we are thrown away.

The fight against this newest outrage has already begun--you can join the struggle. For more information both about the effects of AGENT ORANGE and the struggle, see article on p. 7.

Vietnam Veterans  
Against the War  
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# VETS GET IT ON

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# LETTERS TO VVAW

**THE VETERAN** welcomes letters, comments and criticisms. Please write. Also, send along any poetry, drawings, photos or stories you would like to see in the paper.

**P.O. Box 20184  
Chicago, ILL. 60620  
[312] 651-1583**

Pyongyang  
Democratic Republic of Korea

Dear Sir,

Somedays ago, we, through our friends came to know about your organization which had fought to end the Vietnam War.

Today, U.S. imperialism defeated in Vietnam, is creating bigger dangers of war in our country, therefore there still remains great obstacles before our people for the country's reunification.

Being a single nation with the same culture and one language through time-honored history, our nation can never live separated into two.

The cause of our country's reunification of our people which is enjoying support and encouragement of fighters who love peace and justice throughout the world will surely be achieved.

Believing that you are paying attention to our people's struggle for the country's reunification, we hope to establish close contact with you.

We shall be much obliged if we receive your positive reply together with a concrete information about you and your organization.

Sincerely yours,

Korean Society for Cultural  
Relations with Foreign Countries

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## BOOTS, Jungle/O.D. Two Each

They tell you to get a haircut, trim your mustache, give you a few medals, and read a perfunctory thank-you note. Forty hours later you get your shower, ETS pay, steak dinner, and a fresh set of dress greens. "Thank you, goodbye, we're proud of you."

Then what? Maybe you take your boots home with you. More than anything else they tell your story--where you've been, what you have seen, how much there is to forget.

Before you left your buddies asked, "How ya gonna act?" Maybe you get a job, go to school, drink or smoke too much, or just leave your room. Everything's normal again. Right? You're back in the world. A lot of people think you were a fool, some want to buy you a beer, but most of all, they're uneasy around you.

For a year you don't say anything. But every time you open your closet, your boots are staring at you and asking, "How ya gonna act?" You're alone. Oh, you're back on the job, or in school, you've got friends, you are making some money, but you're alone. The newsmen, the politicians, the kids with all the answers, they don't know. They weren't there. Well, at least your country is proud of you. You've got this mimeographed letter that says so.

Then you hear that some guys are going down to Washington. Not students or carryovers from the civil rights days, but guys just like you. You wonder what the angle is. There isn't any. Just a lot of guys who are alone, going to school, working, drinking or smoking too much, or locked into their wheelchairs.

A year ago you put the boots, jungle fatigues, and boony cap away. Since then you've been a stranger, a part of nothing. Now once again you get your gear together. You put those boots on. They're part of you. They're what you know, what you've become....

You're home now and Washington was a long time ago. A thing most Americans want to forget. For a while you were part of something. You were with people who knew. But what good was it? The 101st is back in the Ashau, and guys are still coming home in rubber bags. You're a young man, but for a moment you feel like this was your last hurrah.

Then you think of the guys. The ones with wheelchairs and steel arms, the ones with purple hearts, bronze and silver stars, the guys who "hacked it." Their hair is longer, some have beards, but it won't hide who they are. No, this is one time, America, you can't write them off because of long hair and beards. You've known these guys for a lifetime. You clenched a fist and the history of that year and the time after "thank you, goodbye, we're proud of you" was said. It's time you listened, America. There are thousands of us walking and hobbling around. You can't avoid us because we're no longer faceless--we're different. You see, we've got those boots in our closets.

Mac Harness  
Battle Creek,  
Michigan

(For readers who may have forgotten or may never have known, some of the terms in the above essay are translated as--

\*ETS--Estimated time of separation or when you get out; ETS pay was your final check from the military.

\*Going down to Washington--Operation Dewey Canyon III when vets went to DC and threw away their medals to demand the end of the war.

\*Ashau--The Ashau Valley, a long jungled valley stretching between Vietnam and Laos; numerous U.S. attempts to pour in troops as well as artillery and helicopters and airstrikes over a period of years never succeeding in loosening the grip of the NLF on this vital terrain.)

VVAW:

Just a line to let you know that things are progressing well and that I may be off parole sooner than I think.

I particularly was interested in the article on "Agent Orange" and strangely enough I have been experiencing numbness in my hands for the past 12 months or so and shrugged it off as poor circulation. However, not that I think about it, poor circulation would have appeared much sooner and would have been more consistent than the numbness that I have been experiencing. I saw a doctor at the VA Hospital and the bitch tried to pawn it off as, of all things, writers' cramps! At any rate, the purpose of that particular visit was to have it on my records although I mentioned nothing about "Agent Orange." I am sure there was exposure but to what degree I am uncertain. At this point, it is necessary for me to consult a private physician.

Enclosed you will find a money order for \$20 to cover the purchase of 5 patches, and the remainder to be put to whatever use deemed necessary to help keep our organization alive.

I understand that there is no established chapter in this specific area but I would like you to forward 10 or so membership forms and I will begin working on expanding our organization in this area. Hopefully, we can stimulate interest in this area enabling us to cultivate some type of action.

Well, good brothers, will close for now and hope to hear from you soon. Keep struggling and know that ours is truly, ONE STRUGGLE.

In Solidarity,

Paul  
Lansing, Mich

With Sgt. Mike





## **USED ONCE, BUT NEVER AGAIN**

# **VIETNAM VETERANS DAY**



Vietnam Veterans Day March in downtown Chicago

"Fight the Rich, Not Their Wars" echoed through the downtown area of Chicago as 80 veterans and supporters marched behind the banner proclaiming April 22nd as VIETNAM VETERANS DAY.

When Vietnam Veterans Against the War in Chicago first announced plans to build Vietnam Vets Day, it began an uphill battle against city officials who were determined to prevent any public recognition of the demonstration. Vets trying to set up a "History of Veterans" display inside Chicago's Civic Center were told "we don't like you guys." The media contributed by refusing to cover information about the demonstration and actions leading up to it.

While they did their jobs well, they overlooked the most important factor in the entire campaign--the vets themselves. Vets from the factories, the schools, the inner-city projects, the suburbs--vets cut off the GI Bill--vets with "bad paper" discharges--vets disabled in a rich

man's war and sick of the lies about the war--vets from the Vietnam War, from Europe before the war and shiny new vets just out of the military into the same unemployment lines.

This is the "Year of Vietnam" in the movies, books, magazines, and on the streets. We, the Vietnam vets, lived that war from Kennedy to Nixon, from My Lai to Khe Sanh, the "Light at the end of the tunnel" to secret invasions and bombings, right up to the liberation of Saigon.

Now we are expected to sit by silently as the rich commission film makers and writers to change history, pay former General Westmoreland to tour college campuses saying, "We won the Tet offensive." Garbage! Anybody in Vietnam in 1968 knows the U.S. forces, its allies, and motley collection of Saigon puppet troops took an ass-kicking that helped to turn the tide of the war. It's like some doctor saying "the operation was a success but we lost the patient."

And while they are rewriting history, they're still writing off the vets of that era. Climbing unemployment, declining benefits, poor healthcare, and an inadequate GI Bill on the verge of extinction, that's what we get in the "Year of Vietnam." And vets don't like any part of it.

In Chicago and throughout the Midwest, the word of the demonstration went out to the schools, the V.A. offices and hospitals, the postoffice; everywhere the response was the same: "Right on! We are getting the shaft. Let's do it." More than a dozen trade schools, colleges and G.E.D. classes responded to the initial call for the demonstration.

Vets from Minneapolis/St Paul, Battle Creek, Milwaukee, and Chicago and its suburbs--60 in all--came together on the Plaza at Daley Civic Center to set the record straight. For many it was their first--but not their last--demonstration. The banners read "Decent Healthcare--Treat Agent Orange," "Jobs or Income Now," "Decent Benefits for Vets," and "Fight the Rich, Not Their Wars."

Vet after vet stepped to the open mike to speak bitterly about the war, our treatment after it, to damn preparations building toward another war, and to serve notice that the veterans' fight has just begun.

The rally grew as more and more people passing by stopped to listen to each speaker. The cops, usually snickering and goosing each other, dropped their act and started listening, glancing about nervously.

A vet from Milwaukee spoke about how it feels to suffer from "Agent Orange" exposure which the V.A. won't recognize or treat. Another vet from Gary, Indiana, told how it feels to be used once and thrown away in a rich man's war, then coming home to face death at their hands again in the steel mills. A vet from the University of Chicago, pointing to the corporation offices surrounding Daley Plaza, said, "These same people who sent us off to die and kill the people of Indochina in the name of American imperialism, have another thought coming if they think we'll do it again--in South Africa or anywhere else where people are struggling for liberation."

As the rally ended, the vets formed ranks and marched

off in step to the cadences we learned in the military but with the new words of our struggle.

As we marched up and down State Street, a couple of thousand people doing their Saturday shopping saw and heard our message of Vietnam Veterans Day. People smiled and waved, vets leaned on their horns and stuck their fists out the windows and vets downtown shopping joined the march with their wives and children. The demonstration that the city officials didn't want had won the hearts and minds of the people who saw it.

Across the country in San Francisco, a small group of VVAW members set up a table and banner in front of the Bay Area's main Marine Corps Recruiting Station and literally shut it down for the day. All day people passing by stopped to express interest and appreciation for what the vets were doing (for details on this action, see story on p. 10.)

The demonstrations in Chicago and the Bay area took place the day before the anniversary of thousands of vets throwing away the medals they won in Indochina, 7 years earlier at Dewey Canyon III in Washington, D.C. The rally and demonstration on Vietnam Veterans Day were carried out in the same spirit of militancy and determination as that demonstration back in 1971.

Vietnam Veterans Day was a successful step forward in building a national veterans movement. Literally thousands of vets across the Midwest, from different backgrounds and organizations were made aware that vets across the nation are on the move. Hundreds put their stamp of approval on the demonstration by letter, phone or actual presence. When the rich who run this country put out their trash about how we can't get together--Black and white, old and young--we'll stick a fist in their face and say, "We're doing it, Jack and you ain't seen nothing yet!"

**FIGHT the RICH  
NOT THEIR WARS**





## NEW YORK VVAW CAMBODIA, VIETNAM FRIENDSHIP RALLIES

Three years ago, in April of 1975, the Vietnamese and Cambodians won their independence and freedom after years of fighting for it. People around the world celebrated these events culminating years of international solidarity and the massive anti-war movement that aided the Indochinese people. It was a sad month for the U.S. ruling class, and a great one for the people of the world.

In April 1978, two celebrations were held in New York City, marking the third anniversary of these victories. On April 14th, the Group of Kampuchean Residents in America held a rally attended by several hundred people. On April 28th, the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in the U.S. held a celebration that also drew several hundred. The two events were co-sponsored by a large number of American and international organizations, including VVAW.

Both rallies were spirited and it was clear that the ties of friendship between the Indochinese and American people continues to exist.

Even while the Vietnamese and Cambodian armies are involved right now in a border conflict, the fact remains that through the years the common goal of the Indochinese and American people remains the same. During the long war, we were committed to an end of U.S. intervention in the liberation wars of the Vietnamese and Cambodians. Now, on the third anniversary of their triumph, we still stand with their struggle and support their redevelopment and right to self-determination.

For VVAW, and for many veterans, the victories of the Indochinese were a mighty inspiration. VVAW was founded at the height of the fighting, and spent many years demonstrating and building support for them. We are proud of the role we played and we are proud to count the people of Indochina as our friends and allies.

**FIGHT THE RICH.  
NOT THEIR WARS**

# 8 YEARS IS LONG ENOUGH KENT STATE ANNIVERSARY

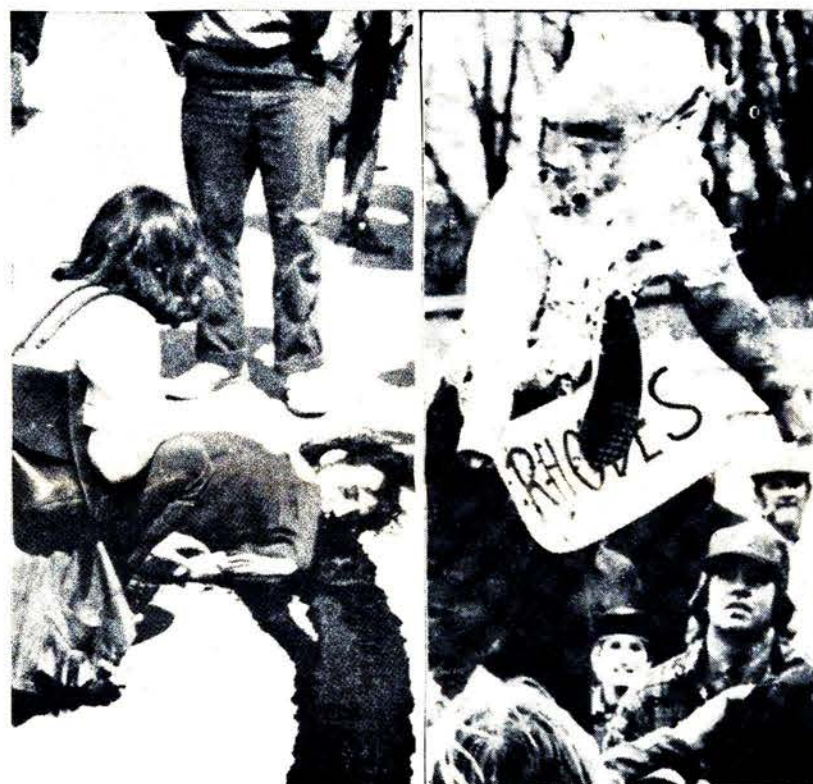
An enthusiastic march and demonstration, teargas and arrests marked the 8th Anniversary of the killings at Kent State. On May 4th, 1970, as U.S. troops poured into Cambodia, four Kent State students were murdered and 9 more injured when the Ohio National Guard, on orders from Governor Rhodes, fired on a student protest demonstration. Now, in 1978, what began as a candlelight vigil ended with the police trying to take revenge--revenge against those who refused to allow the memory of the killings and the resistance to be buried.

Official activities began the night before the 4th with students holding an all-night vigil on the spots where three of the students had been shot down--the gym, about one-third finished, hides the place where the fourth student was killed. Although the vigil began official activities, actions for the 4th began earlier. The Kent Chapter of the Revolutionary Student Brigade along with VVAW members from Milwaukee and Kent State took over the office of the university president, hitting him on both the counts of his participation in the Kent State cover-up and the fact that he personally holds stocks in U.S. corporations in South Africa. This action was coupled with teach-ins and leaf-letting.

On the day of the 4th, VVAW brought a contingent of vets from Milwaukee, Chicago and Battle Creek; vets from Akron and Kent joined us during the rally before the march. Although our contingent was small (it was both a work and school day), we definitely had a presence as we wore medals and fatigues. We marched with the May Fourth Coalition to historic sites of struggle on the campus; at the end of the march, VVAW was marching in front and broke into one of the vets' cadences. More vets marched with us and, at the end of the march there were two speeches by VVAW members.

The first speaker was a vet who had been part of the invasion force into Cambodia in 1970; the second was a new VVAW member from Battle Creek. After the speeches, the demonstration moved to the fence which surrounds the gym and there people were gassed by the police.

That evening as people were breaking up, the police



(Above). Kent State, 1970. One squad of the Ohio National Guard kneels to fire at protestors a hundred yards away. (Lower left). The results of their marksmanship. (Lower right). Kent State, 1978. Effigy of Governor Rhodes is burned. Rhodes was the Ohio governor who had ordered the Guard into Kent State. He, National Guard Officers and the triggermen are free, while students and others are under indictment for protesting this murder.

hit, trying to take their revenge on a march which they could not attack when it was still together. At the Student Center they dragged off a student by his hair, jumping on him and cursing at him. When members of VVAW stepped in to demand that they stop dragging him by the hair, they pushed the vets off, grabbing one of the members of the National Office, Barry Romo, beating him and arresting him for "resisting arrest" and assault on a police officer. Barry ended up with bumps and bruises, plus one tooth which was knocked out when police forced a billy club down his throat. He was released

on \$4,500 bond with trial set for the future.

The spirit of Kent and Jackson State was not forgotten on May 4th. VVAW, along with others, stood up, marched and let the powers that be understand that this fighting spirit would not and could not be buried under the bricks of a gym.

\*\*\*\*\*  
The VVAW National Office needs help with funds for Barry's defense; anyone wishing to contribute should send the money to the VVAW National Office.



# VA, VA Don't Try To Hide, You're On the Rich's Side!

## WORK-STUDY IT'S A LITTLE LIKE JOINING UP

(The following article is based on an interview with Lambert Caldwell, a Marine vet and member of the Chicago VVAW chapter. Like hundreds of thousands of other vets, it is impossible to survive and support a family on the GI Bill, so Lambert took advantage of the VA sponsored "work-study" program. Though his situation is particular, it represents the hassles faced by thousands of other vets in work-study, a program advertised as a great "benefit" for vets, but one which in fact lets the VA get cheap help by taking advantage of vets who can't get by on the GI Bill.)

Just like going into the military when many of us filled out our dream sheets thinking we might be able to have some choice of jobs, Lambert was assured of a job at the VA Regional Office, but ended up working the switchboard and providing directory service at one of Chicago's VA hospitals.

This followed an interview with the hospital's Personnel Director where she talked about the job; it was only later that some of the things she didn't bother to talk about became important--there was no explanation of pay, no statement about how long advance pay would

take (vets on work-study are supposed to get advance pay for the first 100 hours of work at minimum wage--\$2.65 an hour).

More things not brought up were that there was no grievance procedure, no union, and that the VA can in fact terminate the contract at its convenience, conditions that even some of the most rotten sweatshops have a hard time imposing on their workers.

There are four or five different supervisors, but, "You can just take orders from them; as far as alleviating problems, forget it!" So, after a couple of weeks without the much-needed advance payment, Lambert went back to the Personnel Director. There he was told it would be coming after the first 150 hours of work--and he said he would quit, and left the office.

After thinking over the situation, however, he decided to go back to work--since he had gone in early to see the Personnel Director, he was in fact still on time for work. Though the Personnel Director had left for the day, she left instructions that he was fired, and that security people were to throw him out. After hassles, he worked anyhow. Administrators said he might not get paid for his time, but then, he wasn't getting paid anyhow!

The next day his prepayment check arrived.

His job was changed to the file department, headed by a 20-year ex-sergeant who "runs a tight ship" with strict 15-minute breaks which must be taken at the same time everyday, and with the hospital security officers informed about the time so that a work-study vet found out of his area at any other time must account for himself; no eating; no playing the radio--all for the sake of filing. (In fact, the Chicago Regional VA Office is famous for having hired ten vets to do nothing but search for lost files!)

The work-study vet is caught in a bind: for many of them, there is no choice but to take these slave-wage jobs since few jobs allow them to work around their in-class hours. Working conditions are often bad, but there is no avenue of official protest.

It's a little like joining up in the military in the first place--there are plenty of promises, plenty of rosy pictures painted about how life will be (Join the Army--Learn a Trade! Join the Navy--See the World!) When it comes right down to it, the system which used us once to fight their wars is now all too ready to use us once again!

## DISABILITY HASSLE

Jimmy McCullough is a disabled Vietnam Navy vet in a wheelchair, and a member of VVAW in the Bay Area. Disabled veterans, even more than others, are dependent on the efficiency of the Veterans Administration, on checks getting out on time, on their needs not being overwhelmed by VA red tape and bureaucracy. The following article describes one situation where typically the VA raises its petty rules and regulations and sets them against its supposed function--to serve the needs of vets.

Because of his particular situation, Jimmy McCullough received not only disability payments from the Veterans Administration, but a payment of \$450 a month from the State of California which was designed to pay the full-time attendant that he needs. There are three states which will pay this money based on a form filled out by a doctor; however, the payment is not automatic but is decided on a case by case basis.

Payments were working out pretty well until Jimmy had to miss his classes at Laney College in Oakland to attend the funeral of his father. Suddenly, he found all the funds cut off. He could not make the VA under-

continued on p. 11





## **St. Mary's, 51 DIE**

# **TRAGEDY FOR WORKERS PROFITS FOR THE RICH**

When 51 construction workers were killed near St Mary's, West Virginia, it made headlines all over the country, but only because there were so many people involved in one such incident, not because death on the job is anything rare. According to the U.S. Public Health Service, during the early years of the 1970's, almost 3 workers per thousand were killed by or in what they call "Industrial accidents," meaning on the job. In fact when 4 construction workers were killed earlier at this same construction site, the New York Times simply commented that this was "not unusually high a number" for this kind of work.

In the St Mary's disaster, a group of ironworkers, carpenters and electricians were working 170 feet in the air, pouring concrete for the 29th layer of a giant cooling tower. The scaffolding on which they were standing was attached to the 28th layer of concrete which they had poured the day before. Cold weather overnight had made the dangerous practice of using yesterday's concrete to fasten today's scaffolding even more dangerous. As one of the workers on the site said, "You can just stand and look at it, and it's supposed to have a glossy look if it's ready; but this stuff was gray. You could tell it weren't ready just by looking."

The concrete wasn't ready and 51 workers died. But much more is involved than a simple "miscalculation" about the hardness of the concrete on the part of some supervisor or foreman.

The cooling tower is part of a \$677 million generating plant being built for the huge Allegheny Power Company. The construction firm of Research-Cottrell, Inc., of New Jersey, has the contract for building the tower itself. Beginning of construction on this tower was delayed this year because of bad weather, and began on the 1st of April. In most such contracts, there's a penalty clause for every day over an agreed-upon deadline, with bonuses--for the company, not the workers--for every day ahead of schedule that the project is completed. One of the deadlines for the tower had recently been advanced by 30 days. As one of the workers, who watched the scaffolding collapse to the

ground, later told reporters, "Ever since the weather cleared last month, they've just been pushing as hard as they could to get that tower done. And they didn't care if they had to cut safety corners to get the job done."

For hundreds of thousands of veterans, whether or not they're construction workers, the lesson is one which we learned the hard way. The bottom line for the bosses is profits. If that means they send us around the world to fight, get wounded, or die to keep their profits rolling in, well, that's fine with them. And if it means sending workers up 170 feet in the air on a scaffolding attached to wet concrete, well they don't give a damn about that either.

For years, workers have fought against unsafe conditions; in the face of determined struggle, owners have had to institute some safety reforms. The recent strike of coal miners, by far the longest in their long history of struggle against mine owners and operators, was in part aimed at safety, and particularly at the right to walk off the job when faced with unsafe conditions.

One of the concessions granted as a result of years of struggle was the governmental protection agency which is supposed to prevent accidents like that at St Mary's--the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. But like most government "watchdog" agencies, OSHA knows where its interests lie--and that's not with the workers it is supposed to guard. In fact, OSHA's power is severely restricted both in what it can do by law and in the number of people it has to do the work (a total of 1200 inspectors for the nation's 1.4 million work places). OSHA can levy fines; for "serious" violations, the average fine in 1976 was \$544.94, hardly a major blow to the conglomerates who may be hit with these penalties. In a recent case so large as to be newsworthy, OSHA levied a fine of \$47,400 for 21 violations at a Texas grain elevator where 18 workers were killed (and the company still has the "right" to appeal even that penalty).

It's not that OSHA didn't periodically oversee the operation near St Mary's. As the depth of the disaster there became more apparent, research-



Lee Steele whose four sons were killed in the collapse of the scaffolding along with 6 other relatives comforts another parent of one of the victims. While the disaster was a tragedy for the workers and their families and friends, it was merely an inconvenience for the company whose profits for the day were jeopardized.

ers started looking through their files. There they found a report, filed a year earlier, citing Research Cottrell, Inc., saying that there was no evidence that the scaffold atop the cooling tower met required weight-bearing safety tolerances or had a secondary escape route. Further, the scaffolding which had been shipped to the construction site two years earlier was badly in need of repairs then; what repairs were made were done without a qualified engineer. But, despite these reports, nothing was done. Complaints by workers on the job resulted in "non-serious" citations. And several workers at the construction site said they were afraid to file complaints because of reprisals by the employers.

In 1976, a total of 970 construction workers died during the year; most of these made no more than the local obituary column. For a disaster like St Mary's, the media cannot just pass it by, but even though the workers at the construction site were very clear on where the blame for the accident should be placed, the papers carried little of that. Instead, their focus was the "tragedy" and in particular, the tragedy of Lee

Steele who lost four sons and six other relatives in the accident. Steele himself was clear on the situation. He told reporters that the Governor of West Virginia, Jay Rockefeller, had asked to attend the funeral: "I told him he wouldn't be welcome," Steele said.

Another worker summed up the lesson of the accident; "Workers in every industry need the right to strike over safety. As it is now, there's no other way to force them to treat you like human beings and not just another piece of equipment."

Based on what has happened in the past, there will be a lot of scurrying around for the next several months with various agencies trying to assign blame for the accident and the company denying any responsibility. Maybe the company will even find some supervisor or foreman to sacrifice saying "It was all his fault." There may even be a fine. But the accidents, which amount to murder, will go on, in the mines, on the construction sites, in the factories around the country. "All they care about's production, production, production," said one of the construction workers. And that's because production means profit and for the bosses, that's what it's all about.



# Chemical Time Bomb in Vietnam Veterans **DEFOLIANT AGENT, ORANGE EXPOSED**



Russell Jack Dann, disabled from the atomic bomb tests in the 1950s, testifies before Congress.

Ten million gallons of Agent Orange, a chemical defoliant, were sprayed over Vietnam during the years 1962-1970; its purpose, according to the government, was to kill forests and vegetation that provided cover for Vietnamese forces.

The herbicide Agent Orange was created for use in Vietnam by combining two other herbicides--2,4D and 2,45T that have been around for years. Both contain a deadly poison called dioxin, which, for use in Vietnam, was concentrated 100 times more than in its regular form.

By 1970 the results of Agent Orange began to return. Not only did the defoliant have a devastating effect upon plants and wildlife in Vietnam but the effects on the Vietnamese people themselves shocked and outraged millions of people around the world. There were thousands of cases of birth defects or aborted births by mothers sprayed by Agent Orange. Added to this were the uncounted cases of sickness and dis-

ease of Vietnamese people who came in contact with the poison.

Many of us, while in Vietnam, rejected the common rumors that defoliants used by the U.S. government contained an ingredient that was the same as thalidomide (a drug that caused a rash of birth defects all over the world) because it made good military "sense" to deform children--the children would then require extra care and extra people to provide the care, thus denying valuable personnel and resources from the battlefield.

Once the large variety of anti-personnel weapons and their uses became public knowledge, the idea no longer was far-fetched--the idea that the rich in this country who pushed the war and piled up their wealth from it would employ a horrible arsenal of weapons, including Agent Orange, to wipe out an entire race and culture in the name of the almighty dollar.

The effects and use of Agent Orange became more than another ugly memory for Vietnam veterans when, at the end of

March, the Chicago CBS affiliate aired a TV program called "Agent Orange--Vietnam's Deadly Fog." It pointed out that the Chicago Veterans Administration was confronted with up to 27 cases of veterans with diseases directly related to exposure to Agent Orange, a fact they "conveniently" failed to inform the rest of us Vietnam vets about. In fact, a VA spokesman stated, "There is absolutely no evidence that Agent Orange can cause deaths and that this is borne out in a study by the Air Force." There it is, folks! This chump says It's cool--forget it! But what about the flood of inquiries to the VA from Chicago area vets with some or all of the obvious symptoms of Agent Orange: exposure: numbness of the fingers, reduced sex drive, skin rashes, excessive fatigue and nervousness, children with birth defects? The VA has continually stalled on treatment or even informing veterans around the country. But that's no new policy for the VA.

This Agent Orange exposure is just one more of a string of exposures in the past few months. We learned that dapsone, a malaria pill commonly used in Vietnam, was an experimental drug being tested on U.S. troops without their knowledge and now found to cause cancer in rats. We learned that in the 1950's, U.S. troops were used to test the effects of radiation during nuclear tests at the Nevada Atomic Test Grounds. Earlier than that, we found out that GIs were given powerful mindbenders like LSD or other hallucinogens without their knowledge and then filmed like rats. Many of the GIs were later confined to mental institutions or committed suicide as a result.

For years, VVAW has pointed to the way that veterans are used once and then thrown away with an inadequate GI Bill, high unemployment, bad VA healthcare. This latest report about Agent Orange underlines the "concern" of the U.S. government for its military, for the men it sends off to do its dirty work.

We are outraged that not only did the government send us off to fight and die for the profits of the rich, not only did they kill and maim hundreds of thousands of us in the process, but now we face the residual effects of Agent Orange includ-

ing the possibility that our children may be born deformed. As one report put it, we may be carrying a "chemical time bomb" because the effects of Agent Orange can appear years after the individual was exposed.

VVAW and vets across the country aren't going to stand by and let them dump on us again. Within hours of the broadcast, vets in Chicago called a press conference to put out the feeling among vets about this new abuse and to demand VA action. On March 25th, at a Midwest Conference sponsored by VVAW on the problems and program for veterans, those attending came up with a plan of action to take the fight of Agent Orange back to the VA and to point at the class which was in fact responsible. Veterans demanded:

1. The VA publicize the potential effects of Agent Orange to let all veterans know about the potential danger.

2. The VA provide tests for all veterans who may have been exposed, and that vets' families be included in this testing.

3. The VA or Pentagon (or whatever appropriate agency) contact the Vietnamese to see about getting all relevant information about the effects and treatment--the Vietnamese have been dealing with the problem for over 10 years.

4. The VA provide treatment for the effects of the defoliant, that the symptoms be declared "service-connected," and that disability and/or compensation be paid to vets and their families.

Veterans in Chicago and Milwaukee, as well as other places, have mounted a campaign against the VA's non-treatment of Agent Orange including picket lines at the VA and organizing vets to demand treatment. The VA went into shock. Their reaction has ranged from "What you are saying is right and we're doing all we can," to "What are you talking about? We have no evidence of anything." Covering their image, they had the media film a VA worker filling out a form for a vet over the telephone. When vets called the announced number, however, there was no offer to take down the information, only a growled suggestion to come to the VA. Later, the VA began to put out a toll-free information number for vets to call--but a week and a half after the number was announced, it was still not in operation. The VA is in fact demonstrating that their "concern" for vets is exactly the same as that of the government which sent us off in the first place!

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# Fighting Imperialism and From the Union of South Africa To

## DOWN WITH WHITE MINORITY RULE SOUTH AFRICA EXPLODES



Demonstrations for freedom for political prisoners take place under the gun in South Africa.

You work ten or twelve hours a day, and at the end of your six-day week, your paycheck totals \$30. According to the government this is \$40 below what it takes to keep you running neck and neck with poverty. Sometimes, to get to work you've got to live in one of the labor camps. Since it would cost a week's wages, you probably won't travel home to see your wife and kids more than twice a year.

You may live on a reservation like Soweto. Your hut in Soweto won't have electricity. If you have running water you're lucky because at least half of your neighbors won't. And your kids! They catch tuberculosis at a rate 72 times greater than the children of the white masters. Many suffer from malnutrition, and death from starvation is a reality. In many places only 6 out of 10 make it past infancy.

This is what it's like to live under the system of apartheid in South Africa. This is only part of the repression. In addition to robbing your labor, robbing your health and killing your kids, they've also stolen your land and stripped you of your dignity. Nineteen million Blacks--80% of the population--are required to live on 13% of the land. The land rich in natural resources such as gold, diamonds, coal, uranium, and other resources needed for industry is, of course, part of the 87% of the land stolen from you.

Then there is the pass book. Every African is required to carry one. It tells your name,

place of birth, tribe, complete job history and grade of employment. Your employer must sign it every month or you can be imprisoned for up to two years. Without this book you can't get a job, find a house, get married, travel, or even make a pick-up at the postoffice. You can expect to be stopped at least once a day to have your book checked. About 3000 people are arrested every day for violation of pass book laws. This is apartheid--a fascist system whereby a minority of whites exerts its rule over the Black Africans of South Africa (or Azania as the people call it).

### SOWETO UPRISING

Over the last two years South Africa has been in the news because of massive resistance to this oppression. Resistance has been going on in smaller ways for years, but things are changing. Soweto high school students walked out and demonstrated against their rotten educational system in particular and the whole government in general. Police moved in killing and wounding many, but this spark has ignited a new upsurge of a mass movement of resistance. Students have rallied and protested from Johannesburg to Cape Town. Workers walked off their jobs in the mines and factories. The spirit of rebellion is strong, despite heavy repression from the state which includes brute force and the imprisoning of many.

### WESTERN INVOLVEMENT

How can it be that 10 or 20% of the population can hold down the vast majority? It can't do it

without outside help, and it gets that help from countries like the U.S. and Great Britain. Capitalists in South Africa, Great Britain and the U.S. want to keep things like they are. When you

only pay your workers \$30 a week, the superprofits are tremendous. The rate of return on investments is 19%, which is more than twice as much as here in the U.S. That is why you can see ads in magazines like Business Week which say, "If you buy or invest, South Africa makes all the difference in the world."

And U.S. corporations are investing in South Africa--over 400 of them, including most of the big names. Seventeen percent of foreign investments totaling \$1.7 billion dollars come from U.S. corporations. About a third of all money borrowed by South African companies--\$2.2 billion--comes from U.S. banks. It is this money which helps the repressive Vorster regime keep in business.

The U.S. helps prop up this government with more than money. Despite a United Nations arms embargo against supplying military equipment to South Africa

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## VICTORY TO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN FATIGUES FOR FREEDOM

When we were in Vietnam we wore our uniforms to fight for the wrong side. After fighting like hell to protect some rich bastard's rubber plantation, being treated like dirt in the military, and then returning to the streets to find the recruiters' promises of jobs and good VA care were so much crap, many vets thought back and discovered that we had more in common with the people we were fighting against--the Indochinese--than the rich bosses who sent us over there for their profits.

OK, we wore those filthy rags for the rich once! But now we are going to take them and use them for something good. The people of South Africa are standing up against their racist government and fighting back against the many forms of oppression they face. The rich of this country have a big stake in keeping people working like slaves in the gold, diamond, coal and uranium mines where they make big bucks for the corporations.

Our fatigues are going to the Pan Africanist Congress which is a political organization of the South African people and has started guerilla warfare in that country. They have a small but



Sam Makhanda of the Pan Africanist Congress from the Milwaukee Chapter of VFAW

growing army with basecamps in Tanzania where they are conducting training. VFAW supports the fight of these people for freedom and demands that the U.S. and the USSR get the hell out of their country. In fact, some of the first groups of armed fighters in South Africa are using fatigues that VFAW donated last year at African Liberation Day.

We call it the FATIGUES FOR FREEDOM FIGHTERS Campaign. We are collecting uniforms, boots and web gear to be turned over to a representa-



# and National Oppression To the United States of America

## DEFEND AFFIRMATIVE ACTION SMASH THE BAKKE DECISION



Demonstration of 15,000 people of all nationalities on the 15th of April to overturn the Bakke decision.

On April 15, 15,000 people marched in Washington, D. C., demanding that the Bakke decision be overturned. This demonstration is but one of the

organized waves of people that has been building for over a year, denouncing discrimination and the attacks on the gains made by minorities in the 1960s.

This case centers on Allen Bakke, a 34-year-old white engineer, who applied for admission to the University of California Medical School at Davis and was turned down twice. He also applied to 13 other medical schools and was rejected by all of them. But, at the urging of a University of California administrator, Bakke filed suit against the university claiming reverse discrimination because, at the University of California, 16 places out of 100 were set aside for economically and educationally disadvantaged students.

In recent months the media has been putting out the word that Blacks and other minorities have been pushing whites out of jobs and schools, reversing the old situation into one of whites being discriminated against because of their color. "Reverse discrimination" has become a rallying cry for those who are attempting to reverse the gains won during the civil rights and Black liberation struggles.

These struggles hit a high tide in the 60's when what began as a civil rights movement burst into the open rebellions of the ghettos. People refused to live in the same old way. Coming off the rebellions and the struggle they represented, minorities made some gains. Government officials were forced to acknowledge, publically, the existence of "institutionalized racism." As a concession to the struggle, the government was forced to institute some reforms, and one of the impor-

tant ones was affirmative action. Some schools were opened up, job training and hiring for minorities was advanced, and many open discriminatory policies were ended, giving many minorities the opportunity to move ahead. The speed of some of these changes is indicated by the fact that "Blacks to the back of the bus" ended less than 20 years ago.

Prior to the special admissions program at the University of California, a part of affirmative action, only 3 minority students were admitted, one Black and two Mexican-Americans. Of course the history of oppression of minorities by the system goes a lot deeper than admission to medical school, past or present. A quick look at the situation of Blacks today in relation to the rest of the population gives an example of the position of minorities. Black unemployment runs consistently over twice the rate of white unemployment--14% to about 6.5%. For younger Black Vietnam veterans, the figures is well over 30%; for Black young people, the estimates are as high as 60%. The median income for Black families is 60% that of white families, and the figure has actually fallen since the height of the Black liberation movement. But even these statistics don't deal with the everyday oppression of minorities in terms of housing, medical care, education or police repression. As one Black parent commented, "It's bad enough worrying whether my child is going to be able to have a decent education; I worry just sending him to the store whether he'll come home alive."

Clearly, the changes and victories of the 60's did not end oppression for minorities. Yet there were important advances. Today, the Bakke case is being used to take on the legality of affirmative action and minority quotas--any kind of program that hits at discrimination against minorities. In addition to the decision of the California Supreme Court (the decision which is now awaiting a ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court) that special admissions at U.C. Davis are unconstitutional, other programs are being attacked:

\* Citing the Bakke case

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### PEOPLE

## FREEDOM FIGHTERS



ist Congress receives fatigues VVAW.

tive of the PAC at this year's African Liberation Day activities. The fatigues we're collecting, enough for a company, are a real material aid to them as well as a psychological lift because of the international support they represent.

The PAC does not have too much in the way of resources since they will not sell out their struggle to either superpower--the U.S. or the USSR. The U.S. is only interested in supporting liberation struggles as a hedge against the govern-

ments they support, like Vorster's in South Africa, with all kinds of strings attached to the aid. The USSR's "support," as in Angola, amounts to occupation by Cuban troops. The PAC wants nothing to do with either sellout.

VVAW is setting up our Fatigues for Freedom Fighters display at schools, shopping centers, etc, and handing out our leaflets wherever we do work. We are encouraging vets to donate fatigues--they can be sent to VVAW, P.O. Box 20184, Chicago, IL 60620 or given to members of the local VVAW Chapter--and for vets or non-vets who don't have fatigues to donate, we are collecting money to buy boots (these are particularly important to the Freedom Fighters in part because of the distance they have to travel). Response so far has been very good, and we expect to be successful in building more support for the struggle in South Africa, and in unifying and organizing veterans to fight the rich here at home!



# Eritrea

Cont.  
from  
p.14

ly all of Eritrea's 3 million people live in liberated zones. Only two key cities remain under Ethiopian rule--Asmara where 500 Cuban troops are stationed, and Mosawa. The war in Eritrea threatens to become the latest hotspot in the struggle between revolution and super-power contention.

With the Soviets moving in, a whole new dimension has been added to the Eritrean revolutionary struggle. The same Soviet Union that once professed "great love and support" for the Eritrean people, and once denounced Ethiopia as "fascist and expansionist," now lauds the fascist Ethiopian government as "Marxist and revolutionary" and decries the liberation struggle for being "mis-directed by imperialism." In fact nothing has changed but which horse the U.S.S.R. is trying to ride.

The same Soviet Union who champions itself as the true "proletarian internationalists" has unleashed its Cuban mercenaries against the Eritrean people. Military equipment including troop transport planes, jet fighters and tanks are being airlifted in. The Cubans have been busy for the last 8 months trying to whip some Ethiopian reactionary troops into shape to try to break through the Eritrean encirclement of Asmara and Mowana. And finally, their build-up complete, they launched a full-scale invasion with 20,000 troops trying to break through around Asmara and at least 20,000 more invading across the border toward the town of Assab.

The Eritrean people have learned quickly that the Soviet



Eritrean Liberation fighters advancing through desert terrain in the lengthy struggle to free their country--now fighting against the combined Soviet/Cuban/Ethiopian forces.

social-imperialists are no more guided by principles of "proletarian internationalism" than the U.S. is guided by a love for "freedom and democracy." And they are not about to bow down to a new master when liberation is in reach. Two major military pushes led by Cubans have already been repulsed. The number of Cuban soldiers killed in the Horn in proportion to the population surpasses the number of Americans killed in Vietnam. The liberated zones continue to develop with agricultural production, communication and transport networks expanding to meet the demands of an expanded war. And with each day the peoples' confidence and determination to fight until victory increases. Even under the blows of the invasion, a statement of the Eritrean Liberation Front-Revolutionary Council said "our forces are holding fast on the two major fronts and prevent the enemy from making any significant progress."

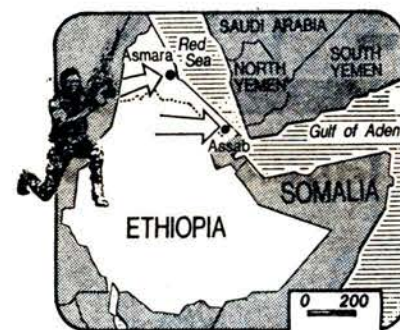
Hot from their escapades in the recent war between Ethiopia and Somalis, the Soviets are out to grab all they can in

the Horn of Africa. In fact, that was but a mere taste of the bigger dish they would like to serve up. With 15,000 Cuban troops in Angola, 17,000 more in Ethiopia, the Russians hope to create a pincer movement that would catch Mozambique and Zambia in a squeeze between the Horn and Angola. But victory in Eritrea is key to their plans to grab hold of the area. And for this they are willing to roll the dice high.

What's at stake is not just the Horn, or even Mozambique, but the rights to vital waterways that would open up trade routes from the Mid East to Europe and the Americas. The Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean are all part of the booty these pirates hope to snatch.

Soviet meddling in the Horn of Africa reflects the world scene today. A scene shaped by stepped-up rivalry for world domination between the two superpowers--the U.S.S.R and the U.S. A world shaped by struggles of oppressed peoples

for liberation. While southern Africa and the Middle East have recently been the world's hot spots of this battle between revolution and superpower domination, the Soviet maneuvering in Eritrea could thrust the struggle there into center stage. The spotlight will certainly be on the Eritreans who along with their brothers and sisters throughout Africa today are standing up to throw the foot of the imperialists the hell off their backs!



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(The basis of the article is taken from the national paper of the Revolutionary Student Brigade.)

## BAY AREA ACTION

# VIETNAM VETS DAY

(The following article comes from members of the Bay Area VVAW Chapter who were also active on April 22, Vietnam Veterans Day.)

Our action was held at the largest recruiting station in Northern California, a large building where all of the services have offices. We set up our table, banner and picket signs on the busiest corner which happened to be at the entrance to the Marine Office. For the first hour we passed out leaflets and sold newspapers. We leaned the Chapter banner against the storefront window of the Marines, and decorated their combat-attired, cardboard

display Marine with a VVAW patch above his left pocket and a copy of THE VETERAN in his hand as though he was selling the paper with us.

We talked to hundreds of people at the busy corner. A woman who had 4 sons sent to Vietnam came up and told us how great it was to see us there; she always had to wait at the bus stop at that corner and look at young people going in to the recruiters to be used and then thrown away, like her sons were. While we were there, nobody went in to see the recruiters!

After an hour, a Marine out of uniform came out and insisted that we remove our ban-

ner and sign from "his" window. We refused. He then actually offered to help us move our display one door down in front of the Army office!

Soon he was joined by 2 other Marine NCO's in uniform who threatened us, but we threatened right back. We loudly proclaimed our right to be there, and the people at the corner bus stop defended us. The Marines turned tail and went inside, saying they would "Call the Cops." A VVAW member talked about how we were used once to serve the interests of the rich--and how the Marine NCO's were serving the same interests by trying to stop us from talking about our experiences. We also

talked about Vietnam Vets Day going on in Chicago and about what was happening with "Agent Orange."

Eventually, federal police arrived and we moved the banner to our table, after pointing out to the people standing nearby that the police were doing the same thing as the Marines.

We finally left after the crowds thinned out, having talked to hundreds of people and having in effect closed down the recruiters for the day. While our numbers were small, our effect was much larger than the numbers indicated--a big victory in a small battle with small forces!

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West coast vets interested in contacting VVAW, either write the VVAW National Office or  
Bay Area VVAW  
P.O.Box 31433  
San Francisco, CA 94131  
Phone (415) 282-0318



# WHO ARE WE



Vietnam Veterans Against the War is a national veterans organization which began in 1967 and which mobilized tens of thousands of veterans to fight for an end to the Indochina War. Our members are veterans not only of Vietnam, but vets from all wars and all eras.

"Used once and thrown away" summarizes how VVAW sees the situation of veterans. We were used once to fight a war for the profits of the rich. And despite all kinds of promises, we were thrown away once we got out of the service--thrown away with high unemployment, an inadequate GI Bill, a VA hospital system that is next to worthless.

Both through our own experience, and the history of the struggle of veterans in the U.S. going back to the end of the Revolutionary War, we know that none of these abuses of vets are going to change if we just lay back and wait--that's why VVAW takes to the streets or does whatever is necessary to fight to improve the conditions of vets.

Having been in Indochina, many of us began to learn that we had more in common with the supposed "enemy" than with the rich class of people who sent us there. Because of what we experience there and because we see the danger of a new rich man's war, we take every opportunity to bring to the American people our slogan, "Fight the Rich, Not Their Wars."

We don't see ourselves as being unique in fighting for a better life. We support others in their struggles--we supported the coal miners in their recent strike, and we support the liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

Our experience has also showed us that vets, as individuals, can do little to improve our situation, but that a group of vets, united to struggle as one, makes a difference. VVAW emphasizes the need for organization and works to build a fighting veterans' movement. We aren't talking about being another American Legion which has a large membership, but has a leadership which pushes a boatload of backward ideas.

We bring together organization and action in our national program, in the fight for Jobs or Income Now, for Decent Benefits for All Vets--regardless of discharge; we take on specific campaigns such as Extend and Expand the GI Bill, particularly the 10-year limitation on the use of the Bill; and Decent Healthcare for all Vets--testing and treatment and compensation for victims of Agent Orange, for instance.

VVAW is a democratic organization; organizational decisions are made, as much as possible, after local chapters have discussed them and provided their input. Regional and national meetings are held to bring together VVAW members from across the country to make plans and decisions for the national organization. Day-to-day coordination is provided by an elected National Office which also puts out THE VETERAN, our national newspaper.

You are invited to join VVAW we welcome all those who want to build a real veterans' movement which will fight for the needs of vets!



Veteran throws back his Silver Star during Operation Dewey Canyon III in April, 1971.

Along with the actions of veterans to force the VA to do its job, we are using other avenues to get out the word about Agent Orange and its effects. Veterans have filed suits under the Freedom of Information Act to force the VA to let out whatever information is available. In some cities veterans have gone to local TV stations to demand that they show the "Deadly Fog" film and thus publicize the effects of the defoliant.

One of the tasks before vets is to get the word out nationwide--about what Agent Orange did in the war and what it's doing to us. Veterans across the country--united--can stick a big fist in the face of the VA and their bosses demanding treatment for this poison, and decent healthcare for all veterans!

## Disability Hassle

### VETERANS ADMINISTRATION

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stand that money for an attendant had to be paid in advance; because of the low pay, there is a constant turnover and many of the people who are interested in the job need to be paid in advance. The rules specifically state that the money cannot be paid to a member of the vet's family. No, says the VA, that's not part of the VA regulation!

Faced with this problem, Jimmy called the office of Max Cleland, Director of the VA; he got no help. He called the office of a Congressman where he was told, "You're lucky you're getting it anyhow."

Once again, the VA had managed to make its regulations more important than the vets it should be trying to help. And its director--well, even though Cleland is a Vietnam vet in a wheelchair, chances are that the VA gets him his checks right on time, so why should he care? Congressmen--we've met up with this tribe before and their interests lie squarely with their rich backers. To win the gains that vets need there is only one place where we can turn--and that's to vets ourselves.

## AGENT ORANGE

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Members of the Chicago Chapter of VVAW hold picket line outside Regional V.A. Office to demand testing, treatment for Agent Orange.

## FLASH

ONLY TWO MONTHS AFTER THE STORY BROKE, THE V.A. HAS SENT TO ITS OFFICES THE WORD THAT AGENT ORANGE AFTER-EFFECTS MAY BE PRESENT IN VIETNAM VETERANS.

IN AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT THE V.A. SAID IT IS EXPLORING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE CHEMICAL, 100 MILLIONS POUNDS OF WHICH WAS USED IN VIETNAM BETWEEN 1963 AND 1970, MAY BE LINKED TO LIVER CANCER AND GENETIC CHANGES. ALTHOUGH V.A. OFFICIALS HAVE SAID THAT THEY WILL INFORM VIETNAM VETS ABOUT THE POTENTIAL DANGER, ANOTHER SPOKESMAN STATED IT WOULD BE AT LEAST 6 MONTHS BEFORE THEY COULD ESTABLISH WHETHER THERE WERE EFFECTS.



## HALT THE US-USSR ARMS RACE

# WEAPONS ARE FOR WAR NOT PARADES OR TALKS

The bomb falls to its target and explodes. A few homes are knocked over, small fires burn haphazardly, and soldiers die. It is the work of the newest weapon developed by the U.S.--the neutron bomb. The restricted area where the blast is effective, and the short range where heat is a factor are actually just byproducts of the explosion, necessary to trigger the release of neutrons. These neutrons pass through buildings, tanks, workers and soldiers; people die from fits and heart failures caused by neutron radiation. It's quick death for those within eight blocks of the blast.

Within one hour of the explosion, the area can be secured. The only long term effects of the radiation is on those not close enough to the deadly area to die immediately; they suffer the effects of neutron radiation for three or four days until they, too, die. The war may still rage as the last of them die, but the rich now can fill the still-standing factories with workers who will be exploited--just as the workers who died in the initial blast. Before the dust can settle, production can resume--the assembly lines roll, the new work force sweats and slaves. Business as usual for the benefit of one class--the profit reapers.

Spurred on by a report (financed by the Rockefeller Brothers Fund) that describes the rising Soviet threat and questions the effectiveness of NATO as a defensive alliance, and by a government study that says the U.S. and Western European Allies have a very remote chance of stopping a Soviet attack without loss of territory in Europe, Carter and his rich cronies developed the weapon for use as a big stick to prod at the military superiority of the Soviet Union.



U.S. forces in Germany hold field exercise on the terrain where an attack could come.

Meanwhile, the USSR is looking for a bigger club, claiming that new types of weapons cannot in-



US MARINES HIT ITALIAN SHORE DURING NATO MANEUVER (RIGHT) AND SOVIET TANK NEAR PRAGUE DURING WAR GAMES (LEFT). DESPITE TALK OF DETENTE AND ARMS LIMITATIONS, BOTH SUPERPOWERS ARE ARMING TO THE TEETH.

### Warsaw Pact



### NATO



timidate them, and that they will not stand idly by while the U.S. produces an "inhumane and barbaric weapon."

While each side blames the other for the responsibility of escalating the arms race, both proceed with continued war preparations at a quickened pace. The U.S. and USSR talk about peace, squabble about terms of a SALT agreement, and hold meeting after meeting that end deadlocked. Each side has tried to appear to be working hard for peace while only hoping to buy time to keep the other side from gaining whatever superiority it can. The fact is that neither privileged class has ever slowed down the arms race for a second, and it is for their "inhumane and barbaric" system of exploitation of workers that they have raised the arms race to its present height.

Washington has laid plans for the FB-111 strategic bomber, accelerated production of cruise missiles, produced not only a new class of subs but longer range and more destructive missiles to go with them. Almost limitless spending by the U.S. has gone into producing nuclear weapons, along with developing the neutron bomb, while vets

from their last war of profit stand in unemployment lines, barely eek out survival on the GI Bill, and face unavailable healthcare. Moscow, not to be left behind, has developed more ICBM's, begun producing the backfire bomber, and has the T-80 tank ready for mass production. The increased technology and production of awesome weapons shows the viciousness of both rich classes and exposes their ever-consuming need for profit. Bullets, grenades and artillery shells still exist in growing numbers--the path they rip through bodies still maims, wounds, and kills, while the rich are safely directing the war from thousands of miles away. Tanks and missiles have been improved for pinpoint accuracy, all to sacrifice our brother GIs to the profit system. In true fashion, the rich rivals expose themselves and their schemes to control more markets, more resources, and the lives of workers through their meaningless words of peace and open acts of war.

The rich rulers of the U.S. dragged us into Indochina, providing arms, support, and troops to keep the door from closing on the abundance of workers they could exploit and the natural

wealth they could rape from the land. Their hunger for profits has forced them to keep their eyes wandering, looking for another country to help "get on its feet," ready to pounce on it and establish the flow of profits. Ask any vet whether he was fighting for the freedom of the Indochinese people, or being used to protect the profits of Standard Oil, CalTex, or whatever corporation you want to name. Ask any vet who lost a buddy in Vietnam, or a family whose father was killed in a steel mill here if they died because of freedom, or because the rich squeeze the life out of any soldier or worker if they can add to their profit-lined pockets.

The bosses of the Soviet Union are playing exactly the same game, and in most of the same ballparks. The superpowers' toe-to-toe stand against each other is dictated by one golden rule--Expand or Die. This rule pits the two groups of bloodsuckers against each other, each wanting the spoils of the other. They know there is room for only one top dog. And further that the bone this top dog is eventually going to pick up is industrialized Europe. At the present, though, the spoils of Europe will have to await the outcome of the other fronts they are fighting on.

This hasn't stopped them in their preparations for the future. Europe is the apple of the eyes of both rich classes, with its highly developed industries and natural wealth. The U.S. capitalists maintain their interests through NATO while the Soviet social-imperialists continue exploiting workers in Eastern Europe and use the Warsaw Pact. European defensive units breakdown to an impressive military strength. (See chart)

While assembly lines speed up to supply the front, the brass of both militaries have organized more war "games" and maneuvers on the European continent and surrounding waters. 280,000 U.S. troops aren't concentrated in one area for a full-dress parade--and the weapons they're armed with are used for only one thing--war.

Billed as a strong deterrent to war and a major defense against a Soviet tank invasion in Europe, the rich in the U.S. developed the neutron bomb for "peace." For them, peace

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# Robert Sobukwe MEMORIAL FOR PAC LEADER

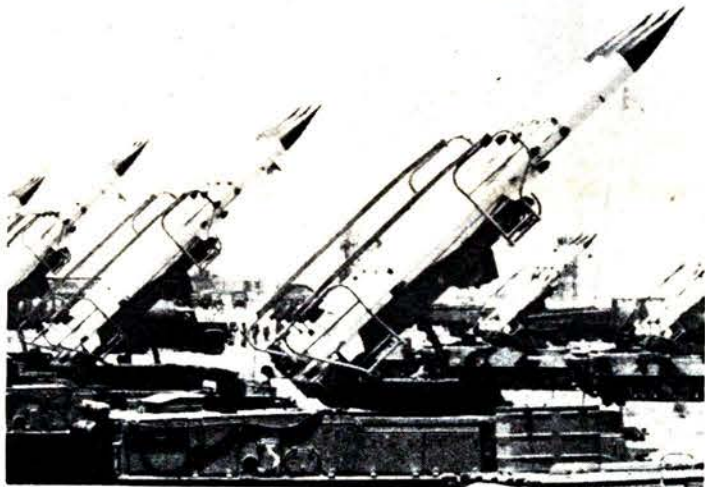
The death of Robert Mangaliso Sobukwe, founding member and President of the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania was mourned the world over. His untimely death of cancer comes when attention is focused on the growing struggle of the people of South Africa against the system of Apartheid. Telegrams and condolences were received from governments and organizations worldwide.

In New York City, the Pan Africanist Congress held a memorial service for their President on the 12th of March at the United Nations Building. The service was addressed by a leading member of the PAC as well as representatives of United Nations delegations from the Organization of African Unity, the

Palestine Liberation Organization, and the Southwest Africa's Peoples Organization. Each spoke of the contributions made by Sobukwe and the fraternal ties between their common struggles.

Several organizations in the United States also were asked to speak. A member of VVAW quoted Sobukwe, saying "We turn our grief into strength," and stated that although we didn't know him, he was our friend because we fight against the same class of enemies. Explaining how that strength is built, he told of the "Fatigues for Freedom Fighters Campaign" saying, "We fought on the wrong side once; we'll never do that again." For VVAW this is the most fitting memorial for a great leader of the Azanian people.

You can't tell us that the continued production of these missiles is a step towards peace.



means continued exploitation of workers in Western Europe, tightening their stranglehold on these countries and their markets, without losing their grip to the USSR.

Other features of this weapon make the bosses gloat even more. A limited nuclear war on the European front between the two superpowers with present nuclear warheads would have a devastating effect on their foreign markets and the wealth they produce. Both sides would suffer millions of fatalities, the economies of friendly countries would be destroyed, and the serious long-term effects of radiation would render land, factories and assembly lines useless for many years. With the neutron bomb, however, only people would be sacrificed, leaving the walls of the factories standing and the assembly lines in working order, with production and profit to be resumed as fast as workers can be thrown into the factories.

In an attempt to forestall the inevitable war and smoke-screen the public, Carter has now announced that the U.S. would not produce the neutron bomb--if the Soviets cut back on their Warsaw Pact tank build-up. At the same time, Carter ordered the go-ahead to develop the Lance missile and artillery shell to be able to deliver the neutron bomb, and agreed to send over 8,000 more U.S. troops to NATO next year. Jimmy stated, "We can readily afford the costs of our military forces, as well as an increased level if needed, to prevent an adversary from destabilizing the peace of the world." Cannon fodder is cheap, and the cost is something the rich man's system can readily afford. It's clear to any vet who's been used by this system and is now trying to collect on the lies and empty promises!

## LOCK & LOAD

Sp5 Willy(Ret.)



The American Legion has a proud history which has included strikebreaking, lynching of Black people and affiliation with the KKK. Now we have learned that their patriotic activities are even more widespread.

A little background. When the Chicago Chapter of VVAW went to Roland Libonati, American Legion spokesman in Chicago, to ask if we could participate in Chicago's 1977 Veterans Day program, Libonati told us, "You're all dead!"

Now we read in Mike Royko's column (Royko is a columnist for the Chicago Sun Times, as well as being syndicated) about how two young punks who beat up and robbed an 89-year-old lady got off with two years probation. The reason they got off so light was because of the influence of their lawyer's assistant, the same Roland Libonati. It seems that even in Chicago, Libonati has a lot of clout.

Royko says about Libonati, "he's a former Congressman and state legislator who is a legend in Chicago politics because he was such a close pal of Al Capone and Capone's successor."

"When he was a congressman, Libonati's chief aide was gangster Sam Giancana's son-in-law. Libonati's main political constituency consisted of men who held their fedoras over their faces when their pictures were taken."

Maybe the American Legion should hold a fedora over its face!

\* \* \* \* \*

However, the Legion is trying to change hats--or at least the color of their robes, as the case may be. We get this from "Rights and Flashes," the "unofficial voice of the Office of Veterans' Affairs" in New Jersey.

"The American Legion has, in the past year, taken a giant step for mankind, and human rights. It has proclaimed that it is against the Ku Klux Klan."

I guess they've figured out that being associated with the KKK isn't too hot for their public image. They can put out their reactionary garbage just as well without a robe.

\* \* \* \* \*

Major General John Singlaub has been fired for criticizing U.S. foreign policy--he wants the U.S. to get ready to fight in Korea--again. Poor John now has to retire at a \$32,000 a year pension. However, all may not be lost. John will try to get some disability payments from the VA. We all know how difficult this can be, but maybe he can use his stars to pull some strings (bet he gets more than 10%).

Anyway, best of luck in all your endeavors, John. Maybe you can get a job at Lockheed Aircraft. I hear they've got an opening as a vice-president for someone with military experience and the right connections.

\* \* \* \* \*

There are no Vietnam veterans buried in the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery. Every other war has a "representative" there, but not us. The Pentagon says that this is because they can't find a body with the right qualifications. I think that the reason is that they want to pretend Vietnam didn't happen!

\* \* \* \* \*

I see where Bob Hope is putting on a special benefit program for the USO. "Mr USO," as he is being called, must be championing the bit for another war to get started before he passes on to the Great Funny Farm in the Sky. Maybe we'll bury him in Arlington Cemetery. We'll call his spot the "Tomb of the Unwanted Comedian," particularly those of us who spent the extra hours on guard duty in Vietnam so his show and its star would be safe.

\* \* \* \* \*

Margaret Brewer has become the first Brigadier General in the U.S. Marine Corps. I guess this shows that the Crotch builds women as well as men!

\* \* \* \* \*

Some old philosopher once said that "In war, truth is the first casualty." I betcha this guy "truth" didn't have a rich daddy!



# VETS NOTES

## GI BILL, NEED TO KNOW

The "Vets Notes" column of THE VETERAN tries to make some sense of a few of the thousands of VA rules and regulations which are of particular interest to vets. In at least three ways the VA traditionally and consistently attempts to squeeze each and every penny (because there are more crucial ways for the government and the rich to spend their money--VA benefits make no profits) and, in the process, step on as many vets as possible. First, the VA doesn't tell vets about the regulations or problems--the effects of Agent Orange (see article on page 7) are the best current example where, when the demands of vets for compensation, testing and treatment are met, will cost the VA millions, even billions of bucks. Second, the administrators write the regulations to be as confusing as possible. Third, regulations spawn like rabbits, creating more and more regulations so that important items are often buried under a sea of paperwork. Unless vets have some idea of what, according to the regulations, we're entitled to, VA bureaucrats will always try to intimidate us with their "knowledge" and pull out of their ass some new rule or regulation.

For instance, hundreds of thousands of vets whose money has run out because their checks haven't come or there's some foul-up in paperwork, have been told by the VA "We'd like to help but checks have to come from Kansas City (or somewhere else that's a long ways away)." In fact, in every Regional VA Office there's some functionary with the power to sign checks on the spot in emergency situations, though the VA will never get around to telling the vet about this bureaucrat. While the VA has, of course, the "power" according to regulations to determine what is and what is not an "emergency," vets who push through the red tape to get to this check-signer have often been able to get the money they need to survive until the VA check finally arrives.

**\*GI Bill Payments:** For veterans who go to school year around, including summer school, checks should keep coming right through the break following the spring semester--IF the semester break is 30 days or less. For most schools, this requires either some sort of pre-registration (that is, you've already signed up for summer school) or willingness of the school certification

### Victory To the People of Eritrea USSR-CUBA GET OUT

The newest war has now broken out on the Horn of Africa. Fresh from fighting alongside Ethiopian troops of strongman Mengistu Haile Mariam against Somalia, the Soviet Union and their Cuban mercenaries are taking their roadshow to Eritrea. Mengistu has even praised the estimated 1,000 Soviet and 17,000 Cuban troops who, he says, "are living with us, dying with us and fighting with us, standing side by side with the broad masses of Ethiopia."

Located in the northern most region of Ethiopia, bordering on the Red Sea, Eritrea has long been the victim of colonial designs. First the Italians came, then the soldiers of the British empire claimed Eritrea for their Queen. In 1952, just two years after a general election voted for an independent Eritrea, the U.S. rammed a mandate through the U.N. that forced Eritrea to "federate" with Ethiopia. And then they moved in. Multinational corporations set up headquarters. The U.S. built the largest military base in the whole of Africa and paid for an intricate spying facility to aid Israel's ef-



Members of a peasant militia in Eritrea

orts to keep an eye on developments in the Mid East. With the U.S. pulling the leash, Emperor Haile Selassie set into motion a terror campaign against the Eritrean people. Factories were shut, unions were banned, all freedoms were denied, intellectuals were imprisoned and the Eritrean parliament was all but destroyed. In 1962, Haile Selassie's forces annexed Eritrea proclaiming it an Ethiopian province.

Throughout this bloody

history the Eritrean people waged valiant resistance. At a high point in the struggle a general strike rocked the country for four days in 1958. Before the strike could be crushed, Ethiopian troops had murdered 1500 people. It was a bitter lesson for the Eritrean peoples. Strikes and demonstrations were clearly not enough to drive the imperialists and their dogs out. Armed struggle was necessary. And so the war for national liberation was born. Today, near-

continued on p. 10

officer (usually the "Vets Affairs Director") to certify your enrollment.

**\*Advance Payment:** Because even the VA realizes that vets cannot start school on no money, the newest version of the GI Bill does provide for advance payment--2 months worth of the GI Bill payments at the beginning of a vets' first semester. But if you get the prepayment say, on the 1st of September, that means no check until the end of November (the prepayment covers the months of September and October and then you have to go to school through the month of November before you start getting paid again). The old system paid in advance (which meant you got paid at the beginning of the month for the following month); it was thrown out when Congress got their bowels in an uproar around vets who were "cheating" on the GI Bill. They decided that no vet has "earned" the GI Bill until he or she has actually done their month in school.

**\*Carter's VA Budget:**

3,132 beds in VA hospitals are being cut (or will be cut) under the proposed new budget for the Veterans Administration. The overall budget from the Carter administration allocates \$18.3 billion, down \$190 million from last year. A big chunk of the money (and, given inflation, the cut is larger than it appears) comes from cuts in "readjustment benefits"--which means the GI Bill. Because of the 10-year eligibility (the "delimitation date") hundreds of thousands of veterans are losing their eligibility for the GI Bill whether or not they ever made use of it.

**\*Delimiting date:** There has been a crack, though only a small one, in the 10 years of eligibility. A new regulation allows increased years of eligibility for vets who can prove that either physical or mental illness prevented them from using the GI Bill in the 10 year period now permitted.

**\*Carter's well-publicized "amnesty" program** was a farce--moreover, vets saw it for the fraud it was, and very few took

advantage of it: who wants to spend the rest of their lives hassling through the red tape involved?

After a big fight with Congress, Carter finally signed another bill, one which has hardly been publicized at all; in fact, it's part of the restrictive new bill which includes refusing vets benefits to those who went through the first program. Of some interest to vets, however, is the provision in the new bill which allows veterans with general discharges for "behavior disorders" (which may mean almost anything) to get them upgraded to honorable. This new law covers 90 thousand plus vets and may be one of the easier ways for those vets to get their discharges upgraded. With the general outlook towards Vietnam vets the possibilities of such an upgrading program in the near future are small. For more information contact VVAW or talk to the nearest VA Regional Office; the bill involved is Public Law 95-126 which went into effect on March 31, 1978.



# New York City VVAW FATIGUES GIVEN TO PAC



On April 1, the New York City Chapter of VVAW began the "Fatigues for Freedom Fighters" campaign at a public meeting. The NYC Chapter joined with other members of VVAW around

the country who are collecting fatigues, boots, clothing, money--as much material as possible--while spreading the word about the struggle of the people of Azania (South Africa).

The film "Only the Beginning" was shown and as usual was enthusiastically received ("Only the Beginning" is a 25-minute film about Vietnam and about Dewey Canyon III when VVAW members threw away their medals on the steps of the U.S. Capitol building). There was a speaker from VVAW, but the feature of the evening was the guest speaker from the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC), Elizabeth Sibeko. PAC has been waging political and military battle against the white minority government in South Africa for over 15 years. Ms Sibeko pointed out that the people of

Azania have been fighting back against Apartheid and foreign domination since the first foreign settlers arrived. She also spoke of the inspiration the victory of the Vietnamese over a much greater military power has given them.

Toward the end of the evening several vets came forward and donated 8 sets of fatigues and 2 sets of boots. Those offering their old military gear made it clear that important lessons had been learned from fighting for the rich of this country. One vet pointed out, "In Vietnam I realized I fought on the wrong side--a lot of other guys realized this too. Tonight I feel better knowing that somebody will be wearing these fatigues soon fighting for freedom instead of against it."

No one at the meeting disagreed with this sentiment. In fact several people signed up to help in this campaign. Vets and non-vets offered time to VVAW to get things rolling. They did so because they know the struggle of the people of Azania is just and that whatever help we can give will help bring them a step closer to liberation.

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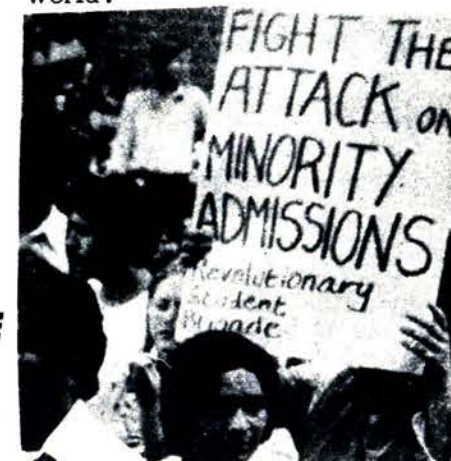
## BAKKE

as precedent, a Los Angeles court declared unconstitutional a law requiring that 10% of some government construction funds go to minority-owned companies.

\* A United Steelworkers contract in a plant in Louisiana which included an affirmative action program for on-the-job training was declared unconstitutional. The program required that program openings be filled on a one-to-one basis in order to increase the number of skilled Black workers. The court ruled the program unconstitutional even though the area around the plant is 40% Black while only 14.8% of the total employed workers in the area are Black and 2.2% of the skilled workers are Black.

These attacks aren't coming down just because of some racist judges (though there are plenty of them). The whole system is in economic crisis--there's overproduction of goods, there's competition from other capitalists and other imperialist countries which has cut off markets and resources. As usual, the U.S. capitalists throw their crisis on to the backs of the people. Despite minor variations in the monthly unemployment rate, in fact unemployment is up for all workers; everywhere we look, there's a general deterioration of social services--they aren't profitable so throw them out. And when these services are cut, when programs like welfare or food stamps or aid to dependent children are slashed, minorities--where unemployment is heavy--are hit the hardest. The bosses try to squeeze oppressed minorities even harder, driving them further down.

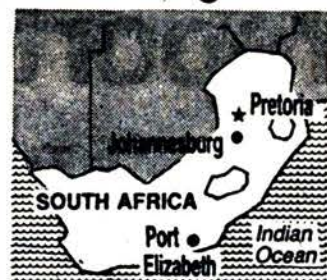
While the Bakke decision will be covered up with all kinds of legal mumbo-jumbo, the basic fact is that it is an important spearhead in the attack on past gains. One thing that the demonstration in Washington and others like it, whether around Bakke or police repression or Africa, shows is that people of all nationalities are taking up the fight against national oppression and discrimination whether at home or around the world.



## South Africa

continued from centerfold

### A dozen of the largest U.S. firms in South Africa



	Employees	Sales	Assets
		Millions of Dollars	
FORD	4,731	\$220	\$170
GENERAL MOTORS	3,800	250	160
COCA-COLA	3,800	N.A.	N.A.
MOBIL	2,869	500	333
GOODYEAR	2,590	44	58
FIRESTONE	2,500	N.A.	N.A.
CALTEX	2,200	400	200
CARNATION	1,587	N.A.	N.A.
GENERAL ELECTRIC	1,587	80	60
OTIS ELEVATOR	1,550	28	15
DEL MONTE	1,492	15	8
IBM	1,478	163	89

ca; despite U.S. lip service in support of this embargo; and despite Jimmy Carter's self-righteous human rights ramblings, U.S. weapons are in use in South Africa. The rulers get around the embargo by licensing foreign companies to produce and sell U.S. equipment to South Africa. Today the South African government has M11A1 armored personnel carriers, M-47 Patton tanks, M-41 Walker Bulldog tanks, Lockheed F104A fighter-bombers, F-51D Cavalier counter-insurgency strike aircraft, and Augusta-Bell Iroquois

helicopters--all U.S. weapons.

### SOVIETS WAIT IN THE WINGS

While the U.S. and other Western powers are making out big in South Africa, the Soviet Union is waiting on the sidelines hoping to turn the coming armed struggle in South Africa to its own advantage. The USSR wants a go at the riches of South Africa just like they got a piece of the action in Angola, like they are in the process of doing in Ethiopia and would like to do in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia). For the people of South Africa

liberation can only come if the western powers are kicked out and the Soviets are kept out. The African peoples have no interest in changing one set of imperialists for another set of imperialists--it would be like exchanging one jailer for another.

### REBELLION WILL GROW INTO REVOLUTION

The days are numbered for Vorster and his kind. The rebellious spirit of Soweto and the thirst for freedom will turn into a full-blown revolution. There is more than just a spirit alive in the country. Concrete steps have been taken. The Pan Africanist Congress is a revolutionary political party which has been operating underground since it was banned 15 years ago. The PAC has formed the Azanian Peoples Liberation Army which is training for the war to overthrow the racist government. Considering the might of the South African government and its backers like the U.S., the task won't be easy, but as we learned in Vietnam, no amount of bombs and modern weaponry can deny a people their freedom when they are willing to fight for it.

### U.S. OUT OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

### —U.S.S.R. HANDS OFF

### VICTORY TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA!



## Recollections of Vietnam

# WALKING DEAD OF KHE SANH

My battalion of the Ninth Marines, nicknamed "the Walking Dead," was airlifted into the mountain valley near the evacuated hamlet of Khe Sanh during the Tet offensive of 1968. The U.S. inability to stop the fighting during Tet finally extinguished once and for all the illusion of "light at the end of the tunnel." After Khe Sanh, Hue and the Tet of 1968 people in the U.S. came to realize we were not winning the Vietnam War.

Khe Sanh was featured on the cover of *Time Magazine* under the bold headline "Khe Sanh -- America's Dien Bien Phu?" (the French colonial war in Vietnam ended in 1954 with their defeat at Dien Bien Phu). I took the magazine with me when I was airlifted into the base and showed it around. Everyone was interested and thrilled to be in the news. It had seemed plausible that Khe Sanh was of strategic value in our efforts, but the *Time* article made it clear, even from their conservative slant, that what was at stake was a symbolic turf-holding exercise for big kids. We should have evacuated the base as was discussed, saving lives and retaking it after the offensive, because Khe Sanh was under siege; defending the base drained U.S. airpower leaving other areas unprotected. The base was only defensive and as the end base on McNamara's line across the DMZ to stop infiltration from the north. Under the circumstances, its mission was out of the question.

I think we all felt somewhat expendable being stuck up there. We were told if we were overrun to hide in our bunkers and throw C-ration heat cubes that burn hot into the trench line so the gun ships would know where we were while they blasted the base from above. The North Vietnamese Army outnumbered us 10 to 1. The Walking Dead lost 100 men killed in 87 days of fighting at Khe Sanh and countless wounded. Many of the grunts were hit two and three times. But they stayed up there because there simply were not replacements and the unit was badly understrength at two-thirds or maybe three-quarters personnel level.

I knew about the spirits of Khe Sanh in my regular job in the rear. The days before I left Dong Ha for the bush were filled with a quiet between

those of us left in the rear, broken only by the morbid fascination about the fighting going on and distant explosions. We sent thirty bags of belongings home one week and into our hearts crept the silent spirits of the battle; the frustrations of a strategic mistake; our valley location; and the anguish of the dead.

We were completely encircled. To the north were mountains and North Vietnam; to the south were mountains; the valley narrowed to the east, and toward the west and Laos, the land rose in elevation. My unit was out here on top of a hill holding this strategic point of defense.

I was enlisted and so in the custom of American military in this era I do not know much of the inside military information, and never have taken the time to read the official versions available now in increasing numbers. What I know are the things of the field, the dirt of all wars, the new roar of B-52 strikes, and their glow or arc-light, like some science fiction movie, signalling the extreme destruction going on. The NVA developed a strategy to protect themselves by spreading out over a wide area. We watched our own cargo planes flying through waves of .50 caliber machinegun fire day after day dropping our supplies. All land routes out were cut off. Lots of incoming rockets, mortars and artillery fired from 10 and more miles away became part of the daily experience. We always listened for incoming.

My picture and a friend's were on the cover of the Los Angeles *Times* opening a package of provisions sent from home. The woman photographer ultimately was killed by incoming somewhere else a few days later. War correspondents--I cannot remember their names. At the airport, what was left of it, a cargo plane and several helicopters lay in wreckage. Everything was uniformly dust-covered, not from the blowing winds but from months of pounding by artillery, rockets and mortars, at the peak rates of 1,000 rounds and more daily.

Our jets were no force for the situation because of fighting going on everywhere at once. Lots of villages fell, little outposts were overrun, and the jets were in short supply against the number of re-

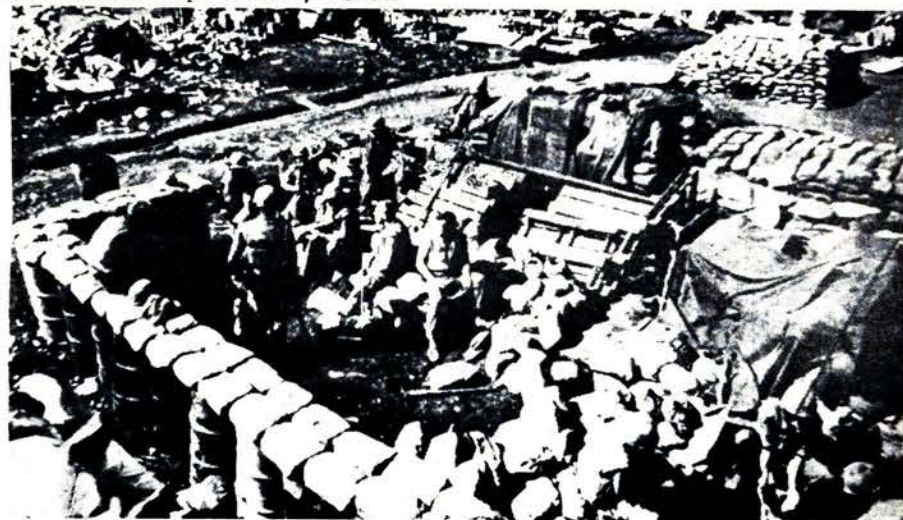
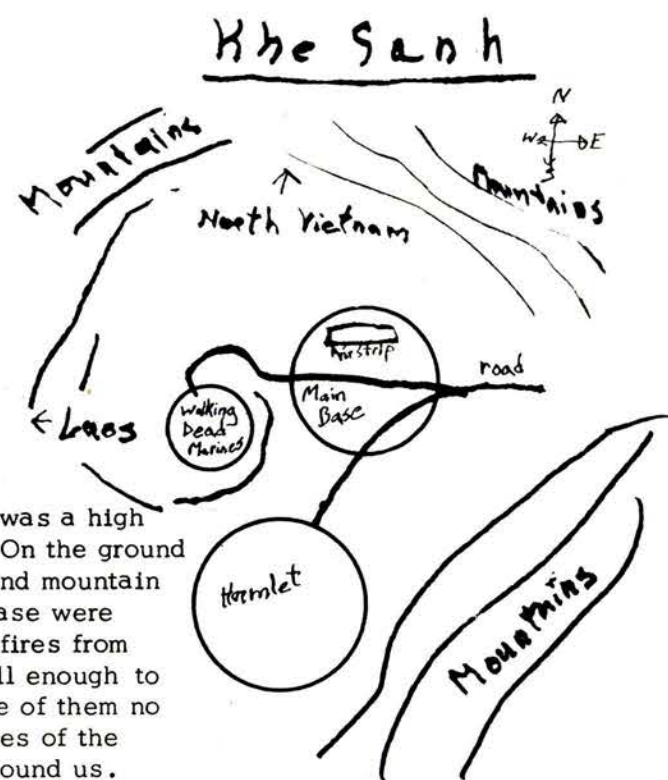
quests. Khe Sanh was a high priority for them. On the ground at night the hills and mountain sides around the base were lighted with small fires from bombs, but not well enough to see anything; some of them no doubt were campfires of the NVA soldiers all around us. For a time one night we watched an NVA truck driving up a mountain several miles away. The big guns and jets were out of our reach so we could not report it; they were too busy to be bothered.

Ready to leave at the airstrip we were crouching in a little bunker talking about incoming and life back in the world, as rounds came in on the helicopter port area because an NVA spotter saw us beginning to gather. "Does it hurt," I think the reporter asked. I said, "Don't worry, if they miss a direct hit we are safe in here. If we suffer a direct hit you probably will not know the difference."

For living Americans the losses of life in Southeast Asia have made a difference. Many Americans, veterans and non-veterans alike, have been affected and could not sit by and let another imperialist, colon-

ial war like Vietnam and battles like Khe Sanh repeat themselves. In this regard Khe Sanh was a victory for the U.S. struggle to build a revolutionary working class movement. It was also a victory for the liberation forces of Vietnam. Even though they never took the base during the 1968 Tet, they tied up U.S. airpower defending Khe Sanh, an outpost at the end of McNamara's line. The U.S. military leaders took the bait by refusing to evacuate and concentrating on the defense of Khe Sanh; as a result, countless smaller units were left defenseless and were overrun, the U.S. Embassy in Saigon was bombed, and a stronghold of the NVA was established in Hue for 25 days, completely exposing the U.S. inability to control the situation in Vietnam.

Don Gordon  
Milwaukee



Marines entrenched at Khe Sanh, 1968.

The episode printed here is only one example of the kinds of experiences that vets had in Vietnam. Vietnam Veterans Against the War hopes to print a book of such recollections, whether from Vietnam, from basic training, from being stationed in Korea or anywhere else around the world--actual happenings as remembered by the vets who saw them or lived them. Given the flood of publications and movies about the Indochina War, we see the need to have material which goes beyond the idea that the war was a "terrible mistake." We invite veterans to think back over their collection of "war stories," write them down and send them in. The exact nature of the final book will depend on the contributions we get, but we believe it can be a powerful statement of some of the experiences which helped us come to realize why we should "Fight the Rich, Not their Wars."