

Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Winter Soldier Organization

# NEWSLETTER

number 31



nov. 24, 74

## General Information

### Leavenworth Brothers Trials End with Acquittal

On November 22, Armando Miramon was found not guilty of four counts of kidnapping and one count of assault on a guard. Miramon was the last of the 6 original Leavenworth Brothers to face charges in court as a result of the July 31st rebellion in Leavenworth Federal Prison. The article in the December issue of Winter Soldier reports on the trial of this Chicano brother, up until the closing arguments of the case. Included in W.S. is the fact that all charges against Jesse Lopez (Miramon's co-defendant) were dropped after the government had finished the presentation of their case. The judge ruled that the government had not presented enough evidence to merit continuing the trial of Lopez. The dropping of those charges (four counts of kidnapping) was the first major victory of this second Leavenworth Brothers trial. The first trial involved four black brothers who were all convicted of various counts of assault and inciting to riot.

This second trial in Wichita was heard by an all-white, middle-class jury, composed of 7 women and 5 men from Wichita. During the course of the trial, several of these jurors were in tears as they listened to testimony concerning the conditions inside Leavenworth Penitentiary. When this jury returned a verdict of not guilty, they did so on the grounds that it was Miramon's right to rebel against the brutal conditions within the prison, particularly in that prison's segregation unit, the "hole." Jurors cried as the verdict was announced, and each of them stood to shake the hand of Miramon. This verdict must be seen as a real victory -- both for the struggles of prisoners and the overall anti-imperialist movement. Miramon resisted the repression of his living conditions, and a jury of 12 people upheld his right to do so.

Details on where Lopez and Miramon will be sent are not yet known. Both of them have many years yet to serve within the federal prison system, and we can assume that neither of them will be returned to Leavenworth (since none of the four brothers who were convicted were sent back to Leavenworth). We will get post-trial details out to people as soon as we receive them. Also, the convictions of the

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four other Leavenworth Brothers are being heard by an appellate court in Denver, and the results of that hearing will be publicized as soon as the hearing is completed. For further information about this second trial, contact: Leavenworth Brothers Offense/Defense Committee, 1715 N. St. Francis, Wichita, KS 67214. The phone number is: (316) 264-7264.

### Unemployment

As is becoming increasingly apparent, the system of imperialism is in deep crisis. Even Ford has been forced to use the word "recession," although he slyly waited until after the elections last month. Recession is mild compared to what is actually developing. Inflation is rampant around the world, particularly in the imperialist countries, and here in the U. S. it's pushing the 13% mark. The GNP has declined for three straight quarters and the cost of living is bounding upward. We think that what is really in store for the masses of Americans is a full-fledged depression -- the kind that will make the '30's look pale in comparison. Although we are not economists, it is apparent that all the classical signs have emerged.

Since imperialism is based on the necessity to maximize profits, and since what is being produced is not realizing that profit for the imperialists, they have been throwing the burden of their crisis onto the backs of the poor and working people in this country -- as well as stepping up their exploitation abroad. The lead article in this month's Winter Soldier takes up what we feel is a critical aspect of the way the imperialists are dealing with the situation -- unemployment (or layoffs). Since the giant corporations do not have to keep their plants open if they are losing profits from them, they have begun an industry-wide cutback of production. Millions of new people are being thrown out on the street - jobless. Each new day brings another batch of newly unemployed workers to the welfare and compensation offices, while millions of others have seen their unemployment benefits expire.

We think that these developments foreshadow a new period in the struggle against imperialism. Since the system of imperialism cannot meet the needs of the masses of people, it will become increasingly important to reach out to these people who are suffering from the employment crisis. The very real oppression that this crisis is fostering is something that VVAW/WSO must begin to speak to. Jobs are scarce and they're going to get a lot scarcer, and it only takes a look at the evening news to realize that one of the major questions on the minds of the people is: how are we going to survive with no income? There are many factors we will have to analyze in order to come up with programmatic approaches to dealing with and speaking to the crunch that is coming down on the people of this country. We think the area of jobs and income for all people is a key area that we, as an organization, will have to speak to -- possibly incorporating this area of work with our national program. It is important for chapters and regions to start thinking about this and hopefully, we will have ideas and analyses brought to the St. Louis National Steering Committee Meeting for discussion.

### Information on Gary Lawton

As reported in this month's issue of Winter Soldier, the trial of Gary Lawton has again been postponed until Jan. 6th because of a recent shooting at the Riverside courthouse. We have frequently published addresses of the DA, the judge, and a member of the County Board of Supervisors in newsletters and in the newspaper. Chapters should again write to these people immediately, demanding that the charges against Lawton be dropped, particularly in light of this latest police shooting because it will be harder for Gary to receive a fair trial in Riverside.

Also, Riverside has just completed a four-page newsprint hand-out on the case of Gary Lawton, and we will be sending this out to chapters in a future mailing. Also, chapters should be aware that we still have copies of the 16-page booklet on the case history of Lawton, as well as the four-page hand-out which gives a run-down on the two previous trials. These can be obtained for the asking either from the national office, or from the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee, PO Box 244, Riverside, CA 92502. Newly re-vived or newly formed chapters probably have not received these materials and may not be familiar with the nearly four-year history of the Lawton case. If so, let us know who you are and we will be sure to get the information to you.



### G.I. Bill Veto

Just before President Ford took off for his trip to Japan and other places, he left word that if Congress sent him their version of an increased GI Bill, he would veto it. The Congressional version of the Bill calls for an increase of 23% in the direct benefits while Ford only wants to give an 18% increase. Actually, both of these measures fall sadly short of anything near what it takes to go to college these days. To make the Bill comparable to World War II benefits, it would take an increase of over 300% in direct benefits.

Because of the possible veto, many independent vets clubs (mostly on community college campuses) have been organizing to get Ford to sign the increase. Recently, there have been reports of veterans confronting Ford when he was speaking at various cities across the country. In Chicago, three vets clubs met Ford when VVAW/WSO and other organizations were protesting Ford's visit at the Chicago Hilton. These were people who had no contact with the Chicago chapter, but the chapter is now meeting with these groups to try to work out some points of unity for further actions. There are other reports from chapters concerning similar joint activities.

VVAW/WSO chapters should prepare for the veto and get ready to make some sort of response. This may be particularly important for those chapters located near colleges and universities. Hopefully, chapters can unite in some form or another with the independent vets groups on the basis of being able to put forward our political analysis in joint actions around the GI Bill veto. Even if Congress overrides the veto, it is still important to point out how the 23% increase just barely meets the rise in prices by inflation, and that the 23% increase will still be grossly inadequate. It is important to point out that the system will never be able to meet the needs of veterans and that the economic crisis now developing will mean peanuts for the people and profits for the imperialists. VVAW/WSO must raise the point that decent education is a right for all people, and it will be important for veterans to unite with other students to fight for that education. Using the fight around the GI Bill provides a good tool for that struggle.

#### Information on Veterans Enclosed -

Enclosed with this newsletter is a table containing figures of the various types of discharges issued by the military from fiscal year 1961 through FY 1974, (the first six months.) On the reverse side of the table are some notes as to what is included in the figures and what isn't. You will notice that the subtotals for all categories equals 588,321; the number we have previously listed as the number of less-than-honorable discharges. Including the newly released FY 1974 figures the number of less-than-honorable discharges equals 637,357.

With each newsletter we will try and figure out what the government figures are for veterans in terms of unemployment, etc. Granted that these figures put out by the government are to be viewed with grave suspicion, they are the only figures we have. We hope that these figures will be able to give the chapters some basis on which to put out information in leaflets, speaking engagements, etc.

Any comments or suggestions from chapters would be greatly appreciated. If you have good documentation on data about veterans, we would appreciate it very much if you could send it along for us to distribute to all the chapters.

#### Attacks on Attica Brothers Continue

The State of New York, not content to have the Attica Brothers on trial for a lengthy list of charges, continues its attacks on the Brothers. On November 4, Big Black, National Director of the Attica Brothers Offense/Defense (formerly ABLD) was arrested for possession of marijuana, planted in the car he was riding

in by a Buffalo Tactical Unit policeman. Although it was not his car, the police knew who was in it (calling him by name before even asking the driver of the car for her I. D. ). The search of the car was illegal, and the discovery of marijuana was clearly anticipated by the police.

On October 26, Willie Smith, the first of the Attica Brothers to go on trial ( his case was dismissed for lack of evidence) was arrested for alleged rape in Buffalo, in a clear attempt to "prove" the initial case against him after the trial had been held and thus further prejudice the public against the brothers.

Finally, Richard Bilello, who had copped a guilty plea in return for the state's promise to send him to a penitentiary near his family, was murdered in Clinton Prison. After being sent to Clinton, he had moved to withdraw his plea, demanding that both his lawyer and the judge be ordered to answer the question about why the conditions of his plea were not met.

For further information, contact Attica Brothers Offense/Defense, 147 Franklin Street, Buffalo, New York 14202.



#### Report on Take-over of Cambodian Puppet Mission -

On October 29, the New York City chapter of VVAW/WSO along with the Indochina Peace Campaign, Indochina Solidarity Committee, Revolutionary Student Brigade and White Lightening 'liberated' the Cambodian Mission offices in NYC. (See December WINTER SOLDIER, Page Two for more details.) The following report of that action is taken from CAMBODIA News in Brief, printed by the Kampuchea Information Agency, office of information of the National United Front of Kampuchea, in Peking, People's Republic of China.

"SUPPORT FOR THE RESTORATION OF THE LEGITIMATE AND LAWFUL RIGHTS OF THE RGNUC IN THE U.N.

"On October 29, a group of Americans, of the 'Anti-imperialist movement' has occupied for several hours the so-called 'Cambodian mission' of the Phnom Penh traitors near the UN building and demanded the restoration of the legitimate and lawful rights of the RGNUC in the UN. "

### Chilean Fascists Planning Children's "Rehabilitation Camps"

It has been a little over a year since the Chilean fascists, operating under the direction of Henry Kissinger, the "Committee of 40," and the US CIA, overthrew the popularly elected government of President Salvador Allende. Since the fascist Junta has come to power, tens of thousands of Chilean workers, students, and intellectuals have been brutally murdered. Thousands more have been thrown into prison without trial and subjected to some of the most depraved tortures imaginable: all brought to the Chilean people in care of US imperialism. There has been no shortage of horrors for the people of Chile under the Junta's fascist dictatorship.

Now there is a new plan afoot that promises even more barbaric repression in the future--the establishment of "rehabilitation" camps for some 600,000 children whose parents supported the Allende government. According to the head of the International Commission of Jurists, Mr Nial MacDermot, the Junta's plan calls for "vast programs" of reforestation and land reclamation using the labor of those children judged to need "rehabilitation." "In other words," said Mr MacDermot, "it is proposed that children of supporters of the previous regime will be taken away from their parents and sent to rehabilitation camps. This is how the military authorities in Chile think to purify their youth."

La Revolucion No La Para Nadie!

The Chilean People Will Never Be Defeated!

Down With the Fascist Dictatorship!

### McAlester

In July, 1973 prisoners at McAlester Prison in McAlester Oklahoma rebelled against the conditions in that prison by burning the prison, in one of the major prison uprisings in this country. This was followed by a period of intense repression with regular beatings and gasings until, in July of this year, Bobby Forsythe, one of the prisoners, died following his being gassed by guards. With his death, some of the message finally got through to the Oklahoma authorities and the people of the state--that the prisoners were protesting conditions that were so bad that they had no other way to resist. Judge Luther Bohanon put out a court order which legally curtailed some of the excesses of the guards, some guards were transferred, and the administration was changed, installing a liberal warden.

In late August, however, after a peaceful demonstration by Oklahoma Black Convicts United (OBCU), the reactionaries in the administration seized the chance to re-instate all the repression once again. Guards who had helped in the earlier murder were brought back, the court orders were systematically violated,

In October, prisoners again struck back--this time burning down the "Rock," the isolation unit which was set apart from the rest of the prison. The state director of corrections, Russell Lash, tried to blame the burning on drugs--that a drug-crazed convict was to blame. More lies. What follows is a different description of what happened at McAlester, from one of the participants.

"43 of the Rock's 48 cells were occupied on the morning of October 19, 1974, when a prisoner overpowered a guard, captured his firearm, freed the other prisoners, and burned that facility to a charred smouldering roach. The guard was

released unharmed and there were no injuries on either side. The action was a complete and total victory for the people in that they accomplished exactly what they set out to do. The Rock is separated from the main prison and ringed by armed tower guards, therefore escape or further action was deemed counter-productive.

Although the Rock has been standing for more than a generation, and had claimed countless lives in this concentration camp for the poor, it was not until May 10, 1974, that it was officially declared to be the "hole." (A nationally circulated newspaper article about the McAlester hole had caused that to be closed.) Our keeper could not envision a McAlester sans a hole, so the Rock became the hole. The term "hole" does not necessarily indicate an underground dungeon, but rather a facility where prisoners are removed from the protective sight of their brother convicts in order to be grossly maltreated with a minimum of witnesses. You can have pastel walls, air conditioning, and piped-in music (none of which the Rock had), but if the primary justification for the unit's existence is so that the pigs will have a secret place to practice beatings, gassings, starvation, and murder, then one can safely refer to it as the "hole" without weathering the wrath of language purists.

The Rock is where political prisoner little Bobby Forsythe was murdered. Just 10 days after the grand re-opening, he was gassed to death by the sadistic pigs of the execution squad while lying helplessly on the floor behind his double-locked cell door 5' x 8' sealed tomb tiger cage--grovelling in his own vomit!

All the fast-talking politicians in Oklahoma seemed unwilling or unable to close the Rock even after the Forsythe murder, so the Committee (that is, the Committee Against Terrorism, Sadistic Harassment, and Indiscriminate Teargassing--C. A. T. S. H. I. T. ) voted 632 to 3 to destroy it. That resolution was carried out by our brave brothers confined there on October 19.

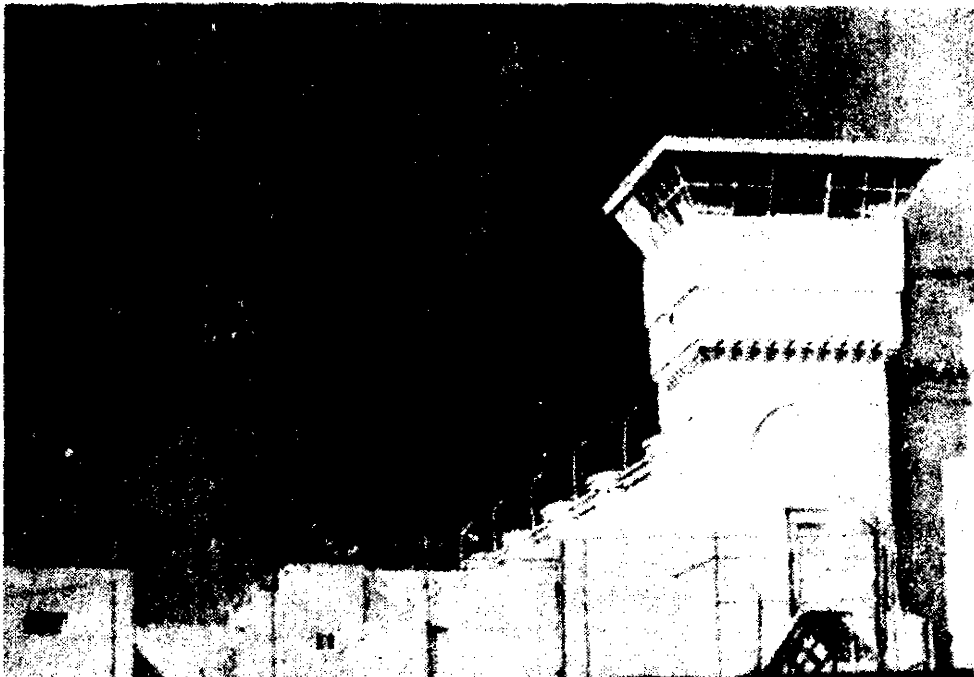
The people who run McAlester have tried to institute a militaristic regime using brutality, force, and violence in an effort to conquer the gooks of McAlester, but we gooks are not having any of it. We realize that the institution of prisons is a tool of class and ethnic oppression, and we know that the Lash's of the world--who have adopted the values of the oppressor and committed their lives to preserving an economic system which is fixed in favor of the few at the expense of the masses--wield an illegitimate authority over our lives. Lash and his retired colonels are in the process of learning the same lesson that America learned in the rice paddies of Vietnam, namely that short of murdering us all there is no way to enslave people whose lives are committed to cooperation and UNITY!

So, the burning of the Rock marked the ending of the Summer Rebellion of '73, but we don't mind. We don't have much to do anyway except plan the winter rebellion of 74/75. "

The prison administration in Oklahoma is intimately bound up with the state politicians, even more so than in most states. Various factions within the state seem to be competing to see who can be the most repressive; when something does happen, there is incredible scurrying to get into the newspapers with statements blaming the convicts or drugs or the other faction for the trouble.

Brothers in McAlester ask us to do several things: first, is letter-writing: to Governor David Hall, State Capitol, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; to Russell Lash, Head of Corrections, P. O. Box 97, McAlester, Oklahoma 74501; to Hon M. David Rigs, 1640 S. Boston, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74119 (one of the more progressive members of the Oklahoma Legislature), and to Honorable Luther J. Bohanon, United States District Court, Federal Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73101. The letters need to say no more than that you, the writer, are aware of the sub-human conditions that continue to exist in McAlester, demand an inquiry into the prison, carried out by someone other than the prison or state administration, demand free access for the press--and anything else that strikes you as appropriate.

The highly efficient propaganda machine which was being operated inside the prison by several political brothers (such as the one who wrote the section quoted above) has suffered a setback in that their typewriter was seized. Prisoners are permitted portable typewriters, however; if someone has a portable typewriter which is not being used and which they would be willing to donate to a good cause, let the N. O. know about it and we will make the necessary arrangements.



#### People's Doctor Found Murdered -- "Clues" Point to NCLC

The following article is taken from printed statements made by Lincoln Detox workers.

"On October 29th, Dr. Richard Taft was found dead in the back room of the auditorium of Lincoln Detox. Taft was one of the doctors that worked in the Lincoln Detox Drug Program. We, his co-workers, believe that Richie was killed. These are the facts surrounding his death:

"Last May 15th, National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC) attacked Lincoln Detox. Taft made an attempt to prevent these people from starting a confrontation with us. Following this incident, NCLC wrote a leaflet in which they accused Richie of being a "finger man" for Lincoln Detox. This leaflet was followed



by threatening phone calls to his home. Almost immediately after Richie's death, NCLC said on television that Richie was a "brainwashed zombie," a CIA agent, and a "violent man... and it is not surprising he met a violent death." About a month ago, Richard testified in behalf of a Lincoln Hospital co-workers, James Richardson. This case involved the killing of a transit policeman by another policeman. Dr. Taft's testimony exposed the fact that James Richardson was deeply influenced by drugs when they attempted to extract a confession from him. This resulted in police officers making intimidating motions towards Richie in the courtroom.

"Two months prior to his death, Dr. Taft was shot at by unknown assailants. For the last couple of months, Richard has been carrying a weapon for personal protection. Recently, he stated to one of our workers that he was in fear of his life and wanted to take a leave of absence.

"Dr. Taft was involved in the development and research of our acupuncture program for the treatment of drug addiction. This work has shown that acupuncture might totally eliminate the need to use methadone for narcotic treatment. Methadone profiteers, the AMA, methadone parole programs, and Eli Lilly & Co., producers of methadone, are severely hurt by acupuncture research. This program has had a revolutionary effect in the field of addiction treatment and was in direct contradiction with everything that the NCLC accused us of. On the day of his death, Taft was due to meet a high ranking person from Washington about the funding of our acupuncture program. It also must be pointed out that the moment these people walked into Detox, we received a bombthreat.

"Dr. Taft was found laying on his side with his long sleeve shirt and dungaree jacket buttoned at the cuff. An empty syringe was found along with a medical tourniquet and 7 empty glassine bags. However, there were no matches, cooker, or keys for the room. In order for Dr. Taft to get into the room he needed keys. The Coroner's Office reported finding no recent needle marks and no heroin in his urine. However, heroin was found in his tissues. The body of Dr. Taft also had a bruise and an indentation in the back of the head and scratches on his wrists. The cause of death has not yet been determined.

"These circumstances lead us to believe that Dr. Taft met with some violence prior to his death, that he was shot up with heroin after death or just prior to dying, and that the injection was administered by parties unknown. That morning Richie was found, we discovered that all Detox's files in the auditorium were broken into.

#### New Film on Methadone

A couple of people in Dayton, Ohio have recently produced a new film called: "Methadone: An American Way of Dealing." This film is an independent, investigative documentary about Methadone maintenance and exposes the myth around methadone in a concrete way. Though the film doesn't specifically state it, people should be aware that about 50% of the people interviewed are veterans. The film is 60 minutes long, in black and white, and rental of the film is \$70. For copies of the film contact: Methadone Information Center, 215 Superior Ave., Dayton, Ohio 45406. The phone number is: (513) 278-8518.

# Regional Reports

The regional news in this newsletter is brief because most of the regions have been involved with planning for and conducting demonstrations on Veterans Day. Reports on the regional activities on this day are contained in the latest issue of Winter Soldier and will not be gone into here. We would like to say, however, that we saw this first major day of actions around our four demands as a rousing success all over the country. There was a lot of people, spirit and militance in the streets all over the U. S. on Oct. 28th and Nov. 11th, and much of this activity was directly tied into the day-to-day work of the chapters. The organization deserves a big "congratulations" for a job well done.

## W. S. Study Group

The Milwaukee Chapter made use of the October issue of W. S. for an in-chapter study session, picking the article (centerfold) on the VA. The list of questions prepared in advance included 1. What is the nature of U. S. monopoly capitalism (imperialism)? 2. Where do the roots of the crisis imperialism is facing lie? 3. Are there true divisions or conflicts of interest between Ford and Congress? Between the government and business? 4. How do we fight the system? How do people learn the system's true nature? 5. How do the demands of the National Program fit into the context of the United Front Against Imperialism and the overall anti-imperialist struggle? Are there different levels of anti-imperialist importance between any of the demands?

Given this outline there followed the specific discussion of the VA article, moving from the specific points made in the article to the more general discussion indicated in the questions. A summary of the discussion, and criticisms of the article, were sent to the NO--thus, not only using the article as a springboard to discussion, but giving the NO the benefit of that discussion in terms of future WS articles.

## Leadership Study Groups in DC/Maryland/Virginia region

The DC/Maryland/Virginia region has been conducting study groups on Saturday morning. The study group is composed of the leadership of the chapters and of the region, and these people meet once a week in a central location to study and relate their study to their practice. The region has summed up these study groups as being a big help in improving the leadership within the region and in applying theory to practice. The DC region has suggested that other regions begin to hold similar types of study groups for leadership where this would be practical.

## Amnesty T-Shirts

The Dayton chapter has Amnesty T-shirts (saying "Universal, Unconditional Amnesty") for sale at \$3 each. For more information, or to order, write VVAW/WSO, P. O. Box 1625, Dayton, Ohio 45401.

### Radio Shows

At least two chapters (that we know of) do regular radio shows--Dayton and Amherst, Mass. Other chapters, such as Rochester, have the possibility of doing such shows. It's been suggested that there be an interchange of information between the people actively engaged in this sort of activity--if you will let the National Office know what you are doing, we will spread the word.

### GI Bill Demo

A group of vets in Pennsylvania planned a demonstration in Washington to demand that Ford sign the GI Bill for the 18th of November. Contact with the Vets Club which put out the call for the action was made by several VVAW/WSO chapters in the area, but through various foul-ups in communications, we did not make the most of the opportunity. This was especially true since there was only a minimum of time to get things together.

For the future (and, given the nature of the economy and Ford's position on the GI Bill and vets benefits in general, this will be happening again), the DC region asks that any chapter hearing of such demos or actions in DC get in contact with DC as quickly as possible so that they can start drumming up local support. The phone number for the Regional Office in DC is (202)543-0817. If it is not possible to get someone there, the chapter can be reached through (301)422-7670. Finally, when you get word of some such action, let the N. O. know about it so we can help spread the word.

## National Office Reports

### How Can the National Newsletter be made more Effective?

We would like feed-back from chapters on how we can make this newsletter more effective and useful for the chapters. We get the feeling that oftentimes, this newsletter arrives, one or two people in the chapter look at it and then it gets filed away. We think it is important that the National Newsletters get read by all chapter members and passed around for discussion of some of the ideas and requests contained in these publications. We try to get as much helpful information out to chapters through this vehicle as possible. If people have ideas as to how this newsletter could be made more "useable" or if chapters have suggestions as to how people can make use of the existing newsletter (i. e. what does your chapter do with it) please let us know. We obviously can't send the newsletter out to the entire membership of the organization, and this means that it is the responsibility of chapter leadership to get the ideas and information contained in the newsletter disseminated to their chapter membership. If we can help in this process, we definitely want to do so, so give us your ideas.

### Thanks for the Pictures

We had more good pictures than we could use in this month's Winter Soldier-- thanks. Pictures came in from Buffalo; Oneonta, New York; New York City; Washington, DC; Milwaukee; Columbus; St Louis; Minneapolis-St Paul; Oakland; Riverside; and Tacoma, Washington. If yours did not appear this month, wait till next month--and don't stop sending them, because there is always a need for good pictures.

Those actions which are best covered in Winter Soldier are those where the chapter or region involved sent us a press-release type description of what went on. Other chapters should start thinking in those terms, because when we are covering organization activities, all we have is what you give us.

### Election of National Coordinators

The organization will be electing coordinators for three positions at the upcoming National Steering Committee Meeting in St. Louis. To date, we have received official declinations of nominations from two people: Jeanie Dolly and Walter Klim. (Walter's letter of declination will be printed in the next newsletter). At this point, then, that leaves four people in the running for the position of national coordinator: Ed Damato, Bill Davis, Barry Romo and Marla Watson. Official announcements regarding the acceptance or declination of these people's nominations have not yet been received. We will try to get this information, and the resumes of those who are running, out in a newsletter in the very near future. In the meantime, it is important that regions don't "lock themselves in" to votes concerning national coordinators. We realize that this information is a little late in coming and that regions are having regional meetings to discuss the election of national coordinators, but it is important that when votes are taken, they be taken on the basis that one or more of the people voted for may not be in the final running. A system of "ranking preferences" might be the best way to do the voting on this question if votes must be taken before we can get the final information out to people.

### Correction to Buffalo NSCM Minutes

There is a factual error in the minutes of the Buffalo NSC meeting; on p. 16 under the discussion of Section III of the Amnesty/DUP Workshop report, the Minutes now read "The strategy of focusing our demands around the V. A. was introduced in a paper presented by the Wisconsin/Minnesota region." The basic "War on the VA" paper came not from Wisconsin/Minnesota region, but from the Northern New Jersey chapter.

### VVAW/WSO Political Defense Workshop

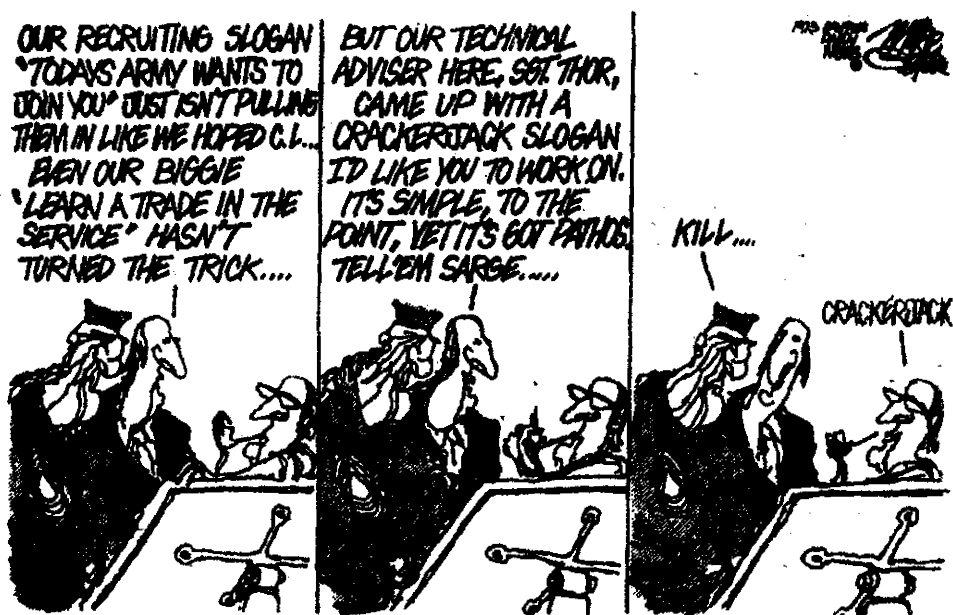
As decided at the Buffalo NSCM, the VVAW/WSO political defense workshop was held in Milwaukee on November 2-3. Basically the workshop went over the final draft it has prepared of the VVAW/WSO Political Defense Manual, a project the workshop has been working on for almost a full year. The manual contains a

summation and analysis of most of the major political defense efforts we have been involved in organizationally. There are also a series of papers outlining various aspects of our politics of defense work (What is a political trial? What is our approach to one? On what basis do we decide to work as an organization on a defense effort? What are the mechanics of political defense work? etc).

Once final changes and corrections are made to the manual and after all the working papers still outstanding are sent in, the manual will be reproduced and distributed to all regions and chapters wanting it. Given the production costs involved (the manual will be over a hundred pages), there will have to be a minimal charge for it. The N. O. was delegated the responsibility of finalizing the draft manual and hopes to have it ready to go at the upcoming St Louis NSCM. All chapters having work reports to write or rewrite should make every effort to get them in at the earliest date possible.

### Dutch Anti-Nato Conference

The Dutch soldiers' Union, the Bond Voor Dienstplichtigen, held an anti-Nato soldiers' conference in Utrecht, Netherlands, November 21-23. GI organizers from all over Europe were expected to attend the conference whose aim is to build international anti-Nato solidarity among European GIs. VVAW/WSO was able to send 4 delegates to the conference: Dick Engle and Nancy Strohl of the Yokosuka, Japan, VVAW/WSO chapter, and Tom Culver and Bob Hall of the London VVAW/WSO chapter. While we have not yet received a report from them as to the outcome of the conference we will have one in the next issue of the Newsletter.



### Notes From the Paper Packer -

Due to the Greyhound workers strike, we will not be sending any shipments via that carrier this month. Packages of WINTER SOLDIER will be sent either Parcel Post or Trailways. In looking at the rates we have found that it is cheaper, in most cases to send packages via Parcel Post. We have been sending Greyhound shipments 'collect'. If we begin sending them PP we have to ask that you begin paying us for the cost of shipment. You will find the cost on the stamping label on the WS package. For all chapters now receiving PP deliveries, we ask that you begin paying for them as we cannot afford to pay for all shipments.

Those chapters now receiving parcel post deliveries are: Burlington, Boston, Harrisburg, Houston, Bellingham, Tillicum, London, Holmstead, Philadelphia, South Deerfield, and Kailua. Those chapters receiving Greyhound shipments which should begin receiving them via PP are: Wichita, St. Louis, and Miami. Chapters receiving deliveries via REA that should be receiving them PP are Denver and Albuquerque. All other chapters will find the present delivery the cheaper way.

If you would like receiving the papers PP please let us know. If you are receiving them PP - please begin paying for them, if you aren't already. IN ANY CASE, WE ASK ALL CHAPTERS RECEIVING PARCEL POST SHIPMENTS TO SEND US THE FEW BUCKS IT COSTS!! THANK YOU!! The other REA and Greyhound shipments will continue being sent collect.

### Letter from the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression

Many chapters and regions have received a copy of a letter from the NAARPR written in response to material carried in Winter Soldier (a letter from Gary Lawton to Angela Davis) and material from the NO Report and the minutes of the Buffalo NSCM. Because the printing of Gary's letter was mandated by the NSC, and because of the nature of the letter from the Alliance, the NO feels that the response should come from the NSC. The Kansas/W Mo/Neb/ Dakotas region and the Southern California sub-region have both requested that the subject of the Alliance be taken up in a workshop at the St Louis NSCM in December. Although we will write to the Alliance to tell them that the response will be delayed, we propose to take no further action on that letter until after the Steering Committee has met.

### Third Class Mailing on its Way

We will be sending out another third class mailing, and it should be in the mail by the time this newsletter reaches the chapters. Included in this mailing will be the most recent issue of GI NEWS, a brochure printed by NCUUA on Ford's clemency program and what it means, and the most recent issues of the newsletter for prisoners, "Inside/Out." People should be expecting the arrival of this mailing.

# Amnesty

## NCUUA Sponsored Amnesty Conference -

The National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty held its second annual amnesty conference in Louisville, Kentucky. The Louisville People for Amnesty, hosted the conference which was held at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary on November 16 and 17. Approximately 200 people attended the conference coming from California to Maine. Many organizations were present including the Minnesotans for Amnesty, the War Resisters League. VVAW/WSO, by far, had the largest organizational attendance with approximately 35 members from the chapters in New York City, Buffalo, Columbus, Dayton, Akron, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, Milwaukee, Denver, San Jose and the National Office.

The conference lasted two days. On the first day, much of the time was spent in workshops which were repeated in the late afternoon concerned with discussing how to organize local and national amnesty programs. These workshops were; Veterans, Church, Families of Resisters, Congress, Legal/counselling, Fundraising, and Media. Members of VVAW/WSO attended each of these workshops and tried to inject an anti-imperialist perspective on organizing around the issue of amnesty.

In the morning session on Saturday, Steve Grossman, an American exile from Toronto, Canada addressed the conference, stating that he was opposed to the Ford re-entry program and stating the reasons why it is important for the American people to pick up the struggle for universal and unconditional amnesty. He spoke of the class nature of America and explained why he had the options to evade the draft. He also spoke of the 580,000 vets with less-than-honorable discharges who are the largest single category of those in need of amnesty. Steve was introduced by Mike Branch, a former POW who also spoke of the need to resist wars of aggression.

On Saturday evening, the 'amnesty constituency' elected five representatives to the NCUUA Steering Committee. Those elected were Ed Damato, veterans; Gary Staiger, GIs; Walter Collins, prisoners; Jeanie Dolly, civilian resisters; and Jenny Stimac, families of resisters.

Sunday morning, three separate work groups were held, in which discussions of all the various workshops were summarized. The purpose of these workgroups were to take all the information of the workshops and try to come up with plans of action for groups in various local cities, towns, etc, to move forward the movement for UUA. Much of the discussion centered around having demonstrations on or about January 27th, the anniversary of the signing of the Peace Agreement on Vietnam, and also the expected end of the Ford clemency program. It was finally decided that we (NCUUA) would support the planned actions of the United Campaign and encourage local demonstrations around the demands of UUA and an end to the war in Indochina.

During the conference, VVAW/WSO members held several caucuses to sum up the work that we had been doing. There were many lessons to be learned from our participation. On Friday night, we held a caucus to discuss the general line we wanted

to put forward in all of the workshops. It was decided that we would send representatives to each of them. The politics we put forward were in accordance with our position paper; the necessity of resisting wars of imperialism, the class nature of American society under an imperialist system, and in particular the 580,000 vets with less-than-honorable discharges.

After the workshops, we summed up our participation in them and found that in many cases, people at the conference saw us as hard-nosed participants. We summed up that while the line we were putting forward was correct, we sometimes came off a little abrasive due to the fact that we were talking to many people who were unaccustomed to discussing politics in an anti-imperialist fashion. It was also recognized that in each of the workshops that our participation was a good thing and that in many cases, we were able to make people understand that we were putting forward a clear understanding of the need to see amnesty as an anti-imperialist issue.

Another lesson that was learned was that we had underestimated our strength as an organization and by the sheer numbers of VVAW/WSO members who attended. This became clear after (and during) the elections for the representatives of the 'amnesty constituency'. Beforehand, we discussed who we thought would be best to represent the various categories. After discussion and in one case voting, we decided that Ed, Gary, Jeanie, Walter and Jenny would be good. We therefore, decided that all members of the organization would vote for these candidates. During the elections, we were criticized for 'packing the meeting' and that it was undemocratic. Many people who could have attended this caucus didn't because they felt that we had already decided who would be elected. This was not true. While we believed that we would have a good many representatives, we expected many more people to show up. The result was that all five candidates were elected.

After the elections, one member of our organization, brought out into the open that there was an undercurrent in the room that we had 'rigged' the elections. This brought out much discussion which was carried on after the great majority of us had left. When we had our sum-up of the elections, it was pointed out that we should have stayed longer to discuss the reasons why we felt it was good to vote the way we did. But the overwhelming majority of VVAW/WSO members felt that we had acted in the most democratic manner for several reasons. First, we put candidates up for election; second, we viewed the entire election process in terms of what was in the best interests of the amnesty movement, and third we were concerned enough about the amnesty movement that we were able to bring such a large contingent to the conference. It was also noted that some of the charges brought forward against us were made by some people who knew that the elections were coming up and that they didn't show up for reasons that remain unclear.

Again, the lesson learned was that because of our understanding of the amnesty issue and because of our commitment to building an anti-imperialist amnesty movement we put forward a good political line, which was not quite understood by the other participants. We decided that on Sunday we should make an effort to explain to people why we were participating and how we thought that we were doing the correct thing.

On Sunday, after some discussion, we felt that since there were so many representatives of families of resisters, who for one reason or another, did not show up at



the election meeting, it would be in the best interests of the families to elect a person from their ranks. Therefore, in place of Jenny, Bob Buyer, a father of a resister who works with AMEX-Canada was elected.

In summing up the entire conference, we viewed our participation as a good thing. It was felt that many people at the conference were putting forward a line that said that we had to depend on the government for getting amnesty, which meant that we had to focus our work around Congress and other elected officials of the system. VVAW/WSO members consistently put forward the line that we had to rely on the mass of people in order to win a universal and unconditional amnesty. This two line struggle took form in most of the workshops, whether it be relying on counsellors and the legal system to 'reform' our way to UUA, or whether it was in depending on the established media to educate people. We felt that it was always important to direct our activity to the people, who in the final analysis would force an amnesty for all war resisters.

Another general observation was that we should not tail behind the criticisms that were levelled at us. Because of the large delegation we had, many criticisms of us came from a fear of a group of 'radical anti-imperialists'. We felt that we had a good line on amnesty, and because of our mass work around the organization's programs that we turned out that many people because we were organized. While we accepted many of the criticisms and recognized many shortcomings in our presentation, we were there to put forward what was best for the amnesty movement, and that we did. Some people tended to think that we were forcing our views, but the majority of people felt that we were not, but rather putting forward views in a forceful manner.

It was clear to all who attended that there is an amnesty movement in this country. VVAW/WSO is one part of it, and while we may have a better political understanding of amnesty, that it is important for us to work with these other groups in order to keep the points clear. One of the suggestions of the conference was that local groups working for a UUA should form coalitions. We think that this would be good for all chapters to participate in as it would give us the opportunity to work with some of these organizations a bit more closely around the amnesty issue, and therefore, giving the amnesty movement a strong political voice, as we have done in the past.

#### Steve Grossman: An Exile Tours Eleven Cities -

Steve Grossman, who has been living in exile for two years, returned to the United States during the amnesty conference in Louisville, Kentucky to speak about the Ford earned re-entry program. There is an article on Steve in The Winter Soldier in the December issue.

Steve will be speaking in eleven cities at the invitation of VVAW/WSO. The cities are: Louisville, (at the amnesty conference), New York City, Washington DC, Buffalo, Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati, Cleveland, St. Louis, Milwaukee and Chicago.

The tour was arranged pretty quickly and the chapters should be commended for the work that they did in preparing press conferences, speaking engagements and radio shows. At this time we do not have much information on the tour results in some of the cities, but in the next newsletter we will have a more detailed report. We do know that Steve appeared on a show with Charles Goodell, head of the clemency board, and from what we understand after a slow start Steve made many points.

### Government's Clemency Program a Dismal Failure -

Some two months after Ford's bogus 'amnesty' plan was initiated, the government is reluctantly being forced to admit it is a total flop. The overwhelming rejection of the so-called 'clemency' program by US war resisters of all categories - deserters, draft resisters, vets with less-than-honorable discharges, (AWOLS only) and prisoners has forced the government into the awkward position of having to try and 'sell' the program.

On November 22, the Secretary of Defense, James R. Schlesinger, announced that the DOD would send letters to the relatives of all Vietnam War military resisters in hopes of finding a few more 'takers' for the Ford plan. This move from the Pentagon big-wigs comes in the face of newly released government figures showing that of the estimated (Pentagon's estimate) 12,500 'deserters' only 1,470 or about 15% of those eligible have applied for the plan. What these figures don't tell us is that about 50% of the 1,470 men applying for the plan were already in military stockades and were able to obtain immediate release from prison by taking the 'clemency' plan. Given the stipulations of the plan it's small wonder that another 5,087 military resisters supposedly called to inquire about the plan and never bothered to call back. (For the record we doubt the veracity of such a high number of inquiries.)

The same boycott of the Ford plan is revealed in the figures for the estimated (by the US Department of Justice) 6,600 fugitive draft resisters: to date only 92 men or about 1.5% have signed up for the program. Charles E. Goodell, the hack Ford appointed to head up the Clemency Board, dejectedly noted his disappointment with the lack of response to the clemency program on the same day as Schlesinger's statement. The former Republican Senator from New York said, "I don't understand it. Those people who are eligible under our program have nothing to lose by applying." Not much Goodie! Not much unless they want to get the bad end of an outrageously raw deal. It should come as no surprise that resisters aren't falling all over themselves taking Ford up on his little bargain. Of the approximately "100,000" civilians, according to the NY Times, who have been punished either by a draft evasion conviction or veterans with less-than-honorable discharges, (their figures again, not ours,) only 742 have actually made applications to the board. Could it be that they know something about the plan that Goodie doesn't???



# Information Requests

## News from the VA

Several chapters with close contacts inside VA Hospitals have heard rumors about pending cutbacks in VA staffs and funding come January. This may also include taxing benefits which are now tax-free. If other chapters with similar contacts hear the same rumors, please send the information to the N. O. Any substantiation that you might find would also be much appreciated so that we can get that information out to people around the country.

## Federal Employees Veterans Association

At least one of our chapters has met with a group of veterans who work in the VA, and who go under the name of FEVA. Any further information about this group should be sent to the N. O. At this point, we are not sure whether or not the group is national or local--but they sound interested in the work we are doing, and we can use more information about them.



## Calendar of Events

Below is a brief Calendar of VVAW/WSO events which are scheduled for the next two months. This idea was suggested to us by the Milwaukee chapter as an easy way to post up-coming activities and important organizational dates. We would like to see this sort of calendar continue in the newsletter, but to do so, we will need in-put, including the dates of major regional activities. Let us know what you think of this idea and send us your suggestions so that we can keep such a calendar current, through regular up-dates.

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Nov. 29-31: | GI weekend workshop in Chicago   |
| Dec. 2:     | Tentative date for beginning of Bob Hood trial in Oakland, Calif.  |
| Dec. 2:     | Tentative date for printing of <u>GI News</u>  |
| Dec. 16:    | Tentative date for printing January issue of <u>Winter Soldier</u>   |
| Dec. 27-31: | National Steering Committee Meeting in St. Louis, Missouri   |
| Jan. 6:     | Tentative date for beginning of Gary Lawton trial in Riverside, CA.  |
| Jan. 13:    | Tentative date for beginning of Chukia Lawton/Rusty Bronaugh trial in Riverside, CA  |
| Jan. 13:    | Tentative date for beginning of Cincinnati "7" trial in Cincinnati   |
| Jan. 20:    | Tentative date for printing February issue of <u>Winter Soldier</u>  |
| Jan. 27:    | Anniversary of the signing of the Paris Agreement on Ending the War in Vietnam. Second date for national actions in VVAW/WSO national program. Into the Streets! |

TYPES OF DISCHARGES ISSUED TO ENLISTED PERSONNEL BY FISCAL YEAR  
1962 - 1974  
SOURCE: DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

FY	HON $\Phi$	%	GEN $\Phi$	%	UNDES	%	BCD	%	DISHON	%	TOTALS	% of lhd
62	634,047	93.68	25,528	3.77	13,202	1.95	3,359	.49	682	.10	676,818	6.32
63	661,499	94.00	25,069	3.56	13,541	1.92	3,046	.43	538	.07	703,693	6.00
64	738,665	94.26	24,325	3.11	13,743	1.76	2,797	.35	447	.05	779,977	5.74
65	681,830	94.26	25,477	3.52	13,178	1.82	2,478	.34	312	.04	723,275	5.74
66	711,613	95.44	20,883	2.80	10,544	1.41	2,262	.30	273	.03	745,575	4.56
67	670,278	95.31	19,562	2.78	9,920	1.41	3,048	.43	384	.05	703,192	4.69
68	885,182	96.30	18,260	1.98	11,650	1.26	3,645	.39	402	.04	919,139	3.70
69	995,941	96.79	18,053	1.75	11,208	1.08	3,562	.34	187	.01	1,028,951	3.21
70	1,094,903	95.26	27,534	2.39	22,537	1.96	3,956	.34	383	.03	1,149,313	4.74
71	941,444	92.85	38,376	3.78	29,139	2.87	4,643	.45	326	.03	1,013,928	7.15
72	802,394	90.12	43,419	4.87	40,018	4.49	4,167	.46	356	.03	890,354	9.88
73	653,838	90.09	39,120	5.39	29,442	4.06	2,906	.40	434	.06	725,740	9.91
TOTAL	9,471,634	94.15	325,606	3.23	218,122	2.17	39,869	.40	4,724	.05	10,059,955	5.85
74 $\Phi$	291,302	85.59	23,087	6.78	24,333	7.15	1,440	.42	176	.05	340,338	14.41
TOTAL	9,762,936	93.87	348,693	3.35	242,455	2.33	41,309	.40	4,900	.05	10,400,293	6.13

FOOTNOTES:

1. This category includes all Honorable Discharges, retirements, and separations from active duty. It also includes general releases from active duty issued by the Marine Corps upon expiration of term of enlistment or obligated period of service, and general discharges and releases from active duty issued by the Air Force upon expiration of term of enlistment or obligated period of service.
2. This category does not include the following: (a) general releases from active duty issued by the Marine Corps upon expiration of enlistment or obligated period of service, which are included in honorable separations category; (b) general discharges or releases from active duty issued by the Air Force upon expiration of term of enlistment or obligated period of service.
3. 1974 figures are for first six months of Fiscal Year. (Fiscal Year begins in July. Therefore figures for FY 62 begin in July of 1961.

LTHDs FY 62-73		LTHDs FY 74 <sup>③</sup>		LTHDs FY 62-74	
GEN	325,606	GEN	23,087	GEN	348,693
UND	218,122	UND	24,333	UND	242,455
BCD	39,869	BCD	1,440	BCD	41,309
DD	4,724	DD	176	DD	4,900
TOTAL 588,321		TOTAL 49,036		TOTAL 637,357	

DISCHARGES BY RACE (FY71-72) FOR ARMY - SOURCE: DEPT OF ARMY, OFFICE OF INFORMATION									
HONORABLE (%)		GENERAL (%)		UNDESIRABLE (%)		BAD CONDUCT (%)		DISHONORABLE (%)	
FY 71		FY 71		FY 71		FY 71		FY 71	
CAU	455,449 (87.4)	CAU	11,772 (82.5)	CAU	15,890 (80.4)	CAU	1,484 (80.0)	CAU	180 (74.1)
NEG	61,491 (11.8)	NEG	2,411 (16.9)	NEG	3,728 (19.0)	NEG	359 (19.3)	NEG	60 (24.7)
Other	4,169 (.8)	Other	87 (.6)	Other	128 (.6)	Other	13 (.7)	Other	3 (1.2)
Total 521,109		Total 14,270		Total 19,746		Total 1,856		Total 243	
FY 72		FY 72		FY 72		FY 72		FY 72	
CAU	392,937 (87.5)	CAU	16,575 (80.4)	CAU	25,006 (83.1)	CAU	1,334 (78.4)	CAU	178 (66.7)
NEG	52,541 (11.7)	NEG	3,920 (19.0)	NEG	4,866 (16.1)	NEG	352 (20.7)	NEG	87 (32.6)
Other	3,593 (.8)	Other	124 (.6)	Other	233 (.8)	Other	16 (.9)	Other	2 (.7)
Total 449,071		Total 20,619		Total 30,105		Total 1,702		Total 267	

(NOTE: TOTAL BLACK ENLISTED CONTENT OF ARMY FOR FY 71 - 14.3%, FY 72 - 17.0%)