

Vietnam Veterans Against the War-Winter Soldier Organization NEWSLETTER

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General Information

VA Goes Broke

With it's budget of only \$15 billion, the VA can't make ends meet. As of June 1st, the VA started borrowing from its pension funds to pay some of the vets going to school under the GI Bill (apparently 900,000 out of 1.4 million were paid; how the decision was made who to pay and who could starve isn't clear).

\$425 million has been appropriated for the VA to survive until the end of the fiscal year (June 30); but it is part of a large supplemental appropriation bill, and that bill is tied up while the House and the Senate debate one small section of the bill (money for improving railroad track--the House says it's worth \$5 million while the Senate wants to spend \$175 million). Until the House and Senate agree on that section, the whole supplemental appropriation bill is being held up and cannot be sent on to the White House to become law. In other words, vets can starve while the Congress diddles around.

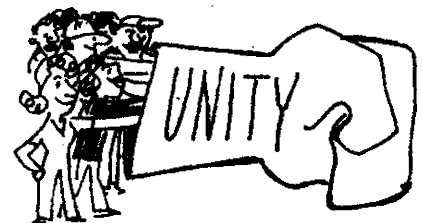
As of June 9th, according to the Veterans Affairs Committee of the Senate, no more VA checks would be paid until the bill is passed. The Committee office said they hoped the bill would be on the Presidents desk by Friday, June 13; whether this happens remains to be seen.

For VVAW/WSO this is a good time to do some agitation around college campuses; the GI Bill at this point is designed so that it can just about last the month (with enough scrimping). When the checks suddenly stop, vets are in trouble. In Milwaukee, the chapter is talking with one individual who has, for some time, been planning to get married right after school, based on GI Bill checks--plans will have to change. The point is that this newest VA red tape blunder is going to have a whole lot of effect on a large number of individuals, and can be used to point out the true nature of the VA. Jamming vet reps on campuses is one possible tactic; chapters who find other good ways to work around this newest issue should let the NO know about it so we can pass the word along.

In work around this issue we need to be careful to avoid pointing at the VA workers themselves as an enemy--apparently the VA deficit doesn't yet affect the workers (though we need more information about that), but the real point is that the system (as represented by the VA and, in this case, by the hassling in Congress) cannot meet the needs of the people. To tie in vets with other portions of the population, chapters should note that part of the same supplemental appropriation bill covers funding for the food stamp program--which is also in trouble until the bill is passed. CONGRESS BICKERS WHILE THE PEOPLE STARVE!!!



WE SUPPORT POSTAL WORKERS RIGHT TO STRIKE



Postal Workers Fight for a Good Contract--VVAW/WSO has Important Role to Play

In the June/July issue of WINTER SOLDIER, there is an article on the Postal workers fight for a good contract in 1975. The struggle of the Postal workers may be one of the major working class struggles of this year, with their contract being the most important industry-wide contract of 1975. Ford has called the Postal workers contract the "pacesetter" for the year, meaning that the Post Office, government and entire ruling class is trying to hold the Postal workers to no more than a 5% wage increase -- hoping that by doing this, other industries will not surpass the 5% increase. What this will mean for all contract struggles is that the ruling class will be trying its damndest to drive real wages lower and lower in an effort to try to pull themselves out of their present crisis. But rank-and-file Postal workers all over the country are saying "No deal" and are organizing to fight for a good contract. The article in WS lays out the main reasons as to why this struggle is so crucial for the whole working class, and the specific demands that the Postal workers are raising.

VVAW/WSO has a very important role to play in the up-coming contract struggle and possible strike (if that is the only way a good contract can be won). There are thousands of vets employed by the Post Office; in fact, there is probably a higher concentration of veterans in the Post Office than in any other industry. The Post Office and ruling class has already begun trying to divide vets from other workers by stating that if and when layoffs come, vets will be the last to be affected. Since vets comprise such a high number of Postal workers, this kind of tactic can dangerously split the ranks of the Postal workers. Our task is to help make sure that these kinds of "divide and rule" tactics are not successful. We have a special responsibility to reach out to vets working in the Post Office and to build unity between all Postal workers.

The article in WS is specifically designed to build the struggle of the Postal workers, and is particularly directed towards veterans. Chapters should be out at the Post Office on a regular basis with the newspaper, particularly looking for large annexes and Post Office centers, though work can be done at any Post Office instal-

lation. It will be necessary to find out the schedules and shifts of the workers so as to be at the P. O. 's at a time when we can meet with the most workers. Leaflets can also be taken to the Postal workers which not only speak to the contract fight, but to other struggles the organization is involved in locally. Where chapters have been working with Postal workers (such as in New Jersey), many of these vets have been brought into the organization.

To further build the unity and struggle of the Postal workers, chapters should like up with local committees of Postal workers that are being formed to fight for a good contract. If local committees do not exist, then chapters should check out the possibilities for helping to build such committees -- though this kind of work will have to be coordinated with the National Postal Workers for a Good Contract Committee. This national committee has east and west coast addresses:

129 W. 22nd St. 9th Floor
New York, New York 10011
(212) 243-7819

and

P. O. Box 5476
Oakland, California 94605

In the event that the Postal workers do go on strike, VVAW/WSO's responsibilities will be even greater. In the 1970 Postal strike, the National Guard was called out to be scabs in an effort to break the strike. The up-coming issue of GI NEWS will contain an article on the struggle of the Postal workers, directed specifically at GIs and Guardsmen. If the Guard is called out, we will have a large role in the task of uniting with the Guardsmen, helping them to see that it is not in their interests to break the strike. If chapters are aware of the units that might be called upon to act as strike-breakers, work should begin with Guardsmen immediately to build unity between the Postal workers and GIs.

We must help build the unity of all Postal workers, particularly directing our work towards veterans employed by the Post Office. The struggle of the rank-and-file workers is building and VVAW/WSO has a crucial role to play in terms of pushing the struggle forward. The fight for a good contract is a fight which belongs to this organization, to all veterans, and to the entire working class.



Gary Lawton Freed!

On May 12th, nearly four years to the day he was arrested, Gary Lawton was found innocent of the ambush slayings of two Riverside, California policemen. As soon as the National Office received word of this verdict, we began calling regional offices and told them to call chapters. So, hopefully, all chapters were aware of this victory before now. This is a real victory and one that came as the result of four years of hard work and struggle. VVAW/WSO played a very important role in bringing about this victory since the struggle to free Gary Lawton was adopted as a national project of the organization in 1972. Though the organization's work around Gary's struggle often fell short of what we should have been doing and though most chapters did not always take up this national project in a consistent way, during the last year, VVAW/WSO's Lawton work had improved a great deal as chapters began taking the struggle out to their communities and linking it up with the hundreds of other struggles being waged to fight police repression -- making the fight for Gary's freedom a living thing and something concrete for thousands of people across the country. It was mass struggle and the building of a movement of people who were demanding Gary's freedom that brought about the victory in Riverside. Though we made many mistakes in our Lawton work, we should still feel proud that VVAW/WSO was a part of making this victory a reality.

For those of you who have been following the smaller details of Lawton's struggle, in 1971, Gary was charged with shooting into an occupied dwelling. This incident was alleged to have occurred in 1968. The prosecution in the murder case had been making rumblings about trying Lawton on these charges once the present trial was completed and a verdict had been decided. A week after the verdict of innocent was returned in the case of the ambush killings, Lawton was in court again to hear the disposition of these 1971 charges for the shooting incident. At that time, another victory was won when the prosecution stated they had no objections to these charges being dropped.

FREEDOM FOR ONE IS NOT ENOUGH-- FREE US ALL, SAY ON!

A representative of the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee will be at the next NSCM to sum-up the struggle to free Gary, including the role that VVAW/WSO has played in this fight. Chapters and regions should also sum up their work around this national project so that we can better learn from our mistakes and successes. Our work around police and political repression is far from over, and we should take the lessons learned from our Lawton work so as to apply them to continuing work to fight police attacks in our communities.





McAlester Escape --or Liberation Movements at Home

People who have read the various newsletter articles or newspaper articles, or items in "Inside/Out" concerning the struggles of the brothers at the Oklahoma State Prison at McAlester, have read a good deal of material by Robert Wilson. A political prisoner at McAlester, Robert was in the middle of the struggles there both as a propagandist and a leader. Because of his politics and because of his ability to put those politics into words, we reprinted much of the material he sent us. The following item is a press release from McAlester--Robert was transferred from that prison to Stringtown at the end of March.

"Dateline, McAlester, Oklahoma---

On April 30th, in celebration of the tremendous peoples victory in the Southern zone of Vietnam, C. A. T. S. H. I. T. (the Committee Against Terrorism, Sadistic Harassment and Indiscriminate Teargassing--of which Robert was the Executive Riot Coordinator) perfected the escape of political prisoner Robert Wilson from the Stringtown prison camp. In what concentration camp authorities described as "a meticulously executed escape plan," Comrade Robert, along with two other inmates, hijacked the prison bus which was in transit to McAlester Prison. The enemy believes that Robert Wilson was met at a pre-arranged rendezvous with a 'safe' vehicle. C. A. T. S. H. I. T. urges all our revolutionary sisters and brothers to aid our comrade in his future endeavors. He is now out of our hands and into yours! "

Congressional Record

Representative Larry MacDonald, a first-term Democratic representative from Georgia, has taken a sudden interest in VVAW/WSO. Apparently he has decided to single-handedly do the job of witch-hunting which used to be the job of the House Internal Security Committee (HISC), and has the active assistance of government agencies which have access to internal VVAW/WSO documents. Given the latest information concerning CIA activities, it is clear that anything which is sent through the mail can be snatched by the government.

The Congressional Record is a public document which prints the speeches and comments which are made during the normal proceedings in the House and Senate. Any member of either the House or the Senate can insert any document into the Record under the section known as "Extension of Remarks"--which is where the discussion of VVAW/WSO occurs. So far as we know, there have been three such discussions up to this time. The first occurred on March 24; the reference in the Congressional Record is E-1399. It is entitled "Subversion in the Military: VVAW/WSO Targets National Guard" and is mostly the result of the material that we sent out concerning Reserve and National Guard organizing. Obviously, McDonald also has other sources of information. Part of the section is reprinted below.

"Recently an organization known as the Vietnam Veterans Against the War/ Winter Soldier Organization--VVAW/WSO--an adjunct to the Maoist Communist Revolutionary Union--RU--distributed instructions to its members which called for the attempted subversion of our military Reservists and National Guard.

"In particular, this Communist organization urged its organizers to concentrate on those National Guard units which may be called upon to support police in situations of urban disorder or in strikes disrupting essential services...."

(McDonald then quotes three paragraphs from our paper on Reserve and Guard organizing)

"The VVAW/WSO document suggests that its organizers find out where most Reservists from their area are sent for summer training camp and set up a storefront there as a base for their efforts in subversion.

"The Maoists suggest that issues to exploit include taking advantage of alleged incidents of racial discrimination; developing complaints about working conditions such as on 'overnights' trucks breaking down or rain and mud; 'fighting command harassment' over issues such as job assignments and payment for extra duty; and providing 'offensive legal information' kits for use particularly during active duty periods and summer camp. In the latter context, VVAW/WSO may be expected to work in close harmony with the various military law projects of the National Lawyers Guild.

"I have made this document available to my colleague, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, of which I am a member, and to the appropriate military authorities. I hope to report back that action is being taken to thwart VVAW/WSO from accomplishing its goal."

McDonald's next attack on the organization came on May 5 (Congressional Record reference E-2179), and is titled "VVAW/WSO: Revolutionary Infighting."

"Although VVAW/WSO was formed by the Communist Party, USA, as an offshoot of its Veterans for Peace front, VVAW/WSO quickly attracted a melange of anarchists, ad hoc Marxist-Leninists, and alienated New Left revolutionaries who were united

primarily by their hatred of all things American.

"Involved in many violent street confrontations with police during the "Peace" demonstrations, in which VVAW members often acted as 'goon squads' for the anti-war activists, VVAW/WSO became a target for colonization by the Maoist Communist Revolutionary Union during 1973. Early in 1974, the disciplined RU cadres effected a takeover of the VVAW/WSO national office and many regional chapters.

"Faction fighting has now surfaced among the radical veterans. In California, an antirevolutionary union faction has expelled the entire membership of the northern California chapters and of one southern California chapter. The anti-RU group also fired Jeanne Friedman, the regional coordinator, and 'laid out a process by which northern California people--with the exception of the leadership--could join VVAW/WSO after a trial period.'

"Despite strident appeals for help from the Anti-Imperialist Caucus, as the expelled RU faction is called, the VVAW/WSO national office has been unable to provide any assistance.

(McDonald then quotes several sentences from Jeanne Friedman's letter to the organization)

"Another factional dispute has come to the forefront in Ohio. On April 10, 1975, VVAW/WSO's Ohio regional coordinator, Jerry Kosmaric, resigned. Two weeks later, he too mailed out a general letter giving his reason. Mr. Kosmaric's views, as a VVAW/WSO organizer committed to building a 'fighting' mass veterans movement against 'US imperialism' provide interesting insights into the activities of the RU within VVAW/WSO.

"For the information of my colleagues concerned with the groups attempting to subvert the US Armed Forces, I submit extensive excerpts from his letter. I have edited some of his more scatological phrases.

(Three long paragraphs of the letter follow, with the nasty words taken out).

"Perhaps this letter will provide additional evidence for those persons who have expressed disbelief in the fact of the Revolutionary Union takeover of VVAW/WSO.

"While no doubt the internal squabbles are impairing the effectiveness of VVAW/WSO's new organizing drive directed at the National Guard and Army Reserves which I referred to in my Extensions of Remarks on March 24, 1975, the disciplined cadres of the Revolutionary Union remain targeted toward that disruptive goal.

"VVAW/WSO remains a threat to the internal security of the US and should be the subject of a thorough investigation as such."

Another entry occurs on May 22, 1975 (E-2670) where McDonald attacks the Iranian Student Association (ISA); in the course of that attack, he mentions that ISA members actively supported the VVAW/WSO Armed Forces Day demonstration at Fort Meade. Part of that report follows: "As yet another indication of the close ties between the ISA and our own so-called revolutionary anti-imperialists, the ISA joined the RU-dominated VVAW/WSO at Fort Mead on May 17, to protest various military regulations and discipline....

"The principle chant was 'GIs and Viets, United to Fight.' But it was clearly understood that the fighting would be against, rather than for our Government."

There are some clear lessons to be learned from this. McDonald obviously has his facts jacked all out of shape, but that isn't of primary importance. The people who are running this country--and their stooges such as McDonald--are not playing games, but are out to destroy any movement of the people. They will use any device they can, and when we play into their hands, we are obviously helping

their cause--regardless of how good or not good the intention is.

Over the years we have watched the government use a number of tactics to attack and attempt to destroy VVAW/WSO. First is was "alleged" veterans (the government saying we had no right to speak because we weren't vets). When that didn't work, they attempted to paint us all as "dope-crazed hippies." That also didn't make it. Next came FBI harassment and indictments and grand juries (the Gainesville trials). Now the tactic is red-baiting and anti-communism and witch-hunting.

VVAW/WSO members need to have a sense of what the ruling class is saying about us. To know their tactics gives us one edge in combatting these tactics. There is an attempt to play up the internal differences in the organization--most clearly in the situation around Mary Jo Cook, the FBI informer in the Buffalo chapter, and Joe Burton and the rest of the mess in Tampa, Florida. Struggle is a part of the life of our organization--internal struggle as well as external struggle; we cannot let the activities of dogs like McDonald stand in the way of that struggle. But there is a distinct difference in publically attacking the line of an organization and attacking that organization itself. To disagree with the line that VVAW/WSO should have a vets and GI base and focus, and pointing out the reasons for disagreement is correct and principled struggle (and essentially useless to McDonald and the other stooges of the ruling class); to attack an organization (such as the RU) as an organization simply gives rise to the kind of anti-communism and hysterical blithering that McDonald is putting forward. It also contributes nothing to the struggle within the organization.

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#### Information for Chapters Interested in Reserve Organizing

Friends Military Counseling of Wrightstown, N. J. has available a complete list of training sites at which Reservists will attend summer camp. The list is 350 pages in length, and it identifies the units that will participate, the camps and bases at which they will train, the dates the training will start and finish, and the number of Reservists that will train at each site.

Chapters interested in Reserve organizing should contact the counseling service for the listing in their area. Due to the size and expense of reproduction of the whole document, the counseling service is not sending out the entire document. Chapters wanting this information should specify exactly what areas they wish information about.

The address is: Friends Military Counseling  
P. O. Box 62  
Wrightstown, New Jersey 08562  
(609) 723-2250

Resistance to summer camps has a brief but tremendous history of struggle in Guard and Reserves and has been the source of wide-spread struggle in recent years. Chapters currently doing Guard and Reserve work could use this information to broaden the existing level of work. Chapters that are interested in beginning this type of organizing might find this to be an excellent start.



### Amnesty Meeting Held-

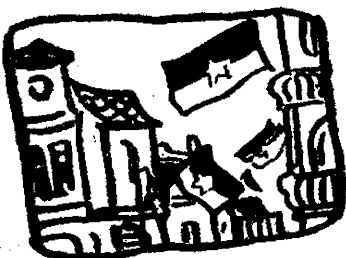
The National Council for Universal and Unconditional Amnesty (NCUUA) recently held its first national steering committee meeting in six months. The long period between meetings saw many deviations in the basically correct thrust of the amnesty movement. Many organizations, and many individuals in some sort of 'leadership' positions in those organizations have been working hand in hand with Congressional people in attempts to settle for less than total amnesty. This move and 'where does the amnesty movement go now that the war is over' were discussed at the meeting.

After long discussions where everyone talked about their experiences with amnesty work, we decided on several important directions for our amnesty work. We feel that the outcome of that meeting was good. The Council discussed the basic points of unity within the coalition, (UUA) and on that we voted not to support any congressional bills which do not cover all categories of those in need of amnesty -- this included the Abzug and Hart bills which were cherished by many of the liberals in the coalition.

The second good thing that happened at the meeting was that we voted on four points that would be put forward as a way to make amnesty a real issue with people rather than something off in the sky, as some people tend to look at it. These four points are basically the same as the four demands of VVAW/WSO. They are: UUA/Single Type Discharge for All Vets, Reconstruction Aid to Vietnam, Jobs or Income for All, and No more Wars of Aggression. It was pointed out that these demands would be a good basis on which local amnesty coalitions could broaden their work so as to be able to link up their work with other organizations that could be united with.

As is with everything else in the amnesty movement, these resolutions are now in the hands of various organizations who will work on them as they see fit. Which means that we shouldn't expect great leaps made in the work. We feel that if chapters of VVAW/WSO that are engaged in local amnesty coalitions put these points forward strongly, that the work around amnesty would take on a new aspect, rather than settle in the dust as it has been done. While amnesty is not the major focus of our work, these demands can better connect with the work we are doing.

At the next NSCM, the national office will put forward a proposal regarding our continued affiliation in NCUUA. In the meantime, we think that the amnesty work must reflect these four new demands or it will become isolated from winning the support of the masses of people.



## Solidarity Messages

In the last newsletter we reprinted copies of the solidarity messages that we sent, on behalf of the organization, to the Cambodians and the Vietnamese on the liberation of their countries. The following telegram, sent from Hanoi, arrived here on the 5th of May:

"Warmest Greetings from Vietnamese People. Great historical victory of independence and freedom scored by our people can by no means be separated from tremendous and precious support of whole mankind among them American People, organizations, and personalities. Hence, Our gratitude and greetings of peace and friendship. Let our Solidarity prevail and assure more success."

On May 20, we received the following telegram, also from Hanoi:

"Our most sincere thanks for your congratulations. Our peoples great and historical victory can by no means be separated from precious support of whole mankind among them progressive American people. We extend to you all greetings of friendship with confidence that positive measures will be taken by American public to healing wounds of war and consolidating peace."

A letter from the GRUNC Mission in Paris was sent on June 3; it is signed by Ok Sakun, Chief of the Mission. (The letter is written in French; we are printing our translation of part of the letter; any chapters interested in a copy of the full letter should let us know. You will have to provide your own translators.)

The letter begins, "Dear Friends," ... and continues:

"We take advantage of this occasion to confirm for you the fundamental positions of our internal and external politics as they were reaffirmed by a Special Congress which met in Phnom Penh from the 25th to the 27th of April 1975:

-As a guide to the internal affairs of our country, we establish "happiness, equality, justice, and a true democracy where there exist neither rich nor poor, neither exploiter nor exploited classes. In short, it is necessary to build a society where all the people live in peace and harmony, in national unity, and where all the people devote themselves to production, building, and the national defense.

-Externally, the Special Congress reaffirms that Cambodia will adhere to the politics of independence, peace, neutrality and non-alignment, its resolute opposition to the presence of all foreign military bases on Cambodian territory, its determination to struggle against all foreign interference in the affairs of Cambodia, against all acts of subversion and foreign aggression against Cambodia, whether it is military, cultural, social, diplomatic, or clothed in the guise of "humanitarianism." Cambodia will not interfere in any way in the internal affairs of any other country, nor devote itself to aggression against or subversion of any other country. Cambodia respects, without reservations, the principle of self-determination and the rights of all countries to decide their own affairs.

Again, my sincere appreciation for your message on congratulations; we are convinced that, in realizing our two primary tasks--the defense of our country and the building of a new Cambodia--we can count on your sympathy, your solidarity, and your best wishes."

# Regional Reports

## National Office to Begin Mailing out Leaflets to Chapters

We've received a request from New York to send out copies of good leaflets done by various chapters so that other chapters can use them, learn from them and possibly re-write them for use in their specific areas. We think this is a good idea and are beginning with this newsletter where we are enclosing a leaflet put out by the Chicago chapter around the Joe Blanco case they have taken up.

We will be sending out chapters' leaflets in the future, and other chapters should not look at this as a mechanical or easy way to come up with leaflets. Instead, we hope that a circulation of good leaflets can provide a way for us to learn from other chapters, and through learning from other chapters' leaflets, enable us to produce even better leaflets for our mass work. The organization produces hundreds of leaflets a year, yet the majority of chapters never see the leaflets other chapters' are using. If your chapter has what you think is a good leaflet -- a leaflet which has been successful in your mass work -- please send copies to the National Office. If you are unable to send us a bulk of 80-100 leaflets (which would be preferable), then send us a good, clear copy of your leaflet which we can reproduce. Along with copies of your chapter's leaflet, the chapter should send comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the leaflet. We doubt that any chapter has found the "perfect" leaflet, but there are many leaflets with many strong points. The rest of the organization should see these on a regular basis. So, send us copies of your leaflets, along with a summation of the success of the leaflet, it's weak points which need improving and it's strengths. We'll then get them out to other chapters, and through refinement and re-writing, we should be able to collectively come up with leaflets that will do a better job of pushing forward our mass work.

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## Chicago Chapter Summation of Work Around Joe Blanco Case

The Chicago chapter has been working around the case of Joe Blanco, a veteran who has been fighting the VA to get 100% disability (see latest issue of WINTER SOLDIER). We felt it was important to share with the rest of the organization our sum-up of our work around the case and the national program. As we carry the struggle forward in the future, we will be able to present a more detailed analysis of our work.

We won Joe to see the need to take up the campaign around his case as well as the campaign for decent benefits for all veterans. Since that time, he has been getting more active in leafletting and planning for actions at the VA. We were also able to involve Joe in bringing out his friends and other veterans from a GED (high school equivalency test) class that he is attending. These other vets came to the last action at the VA and are interested in working around Joe's case and the VA in general.

At the last action at the VA, the militant style we adopted really exposed the weakness of the VA. We were able to call out two supervisors and jam them in such a way that exposed the red tape and stalling tactics the VA tries to put over on all vets. Even though we didn't win anything material, many vets came up to us while we were in the VA and united with the fighting way our demands were put forward. So, even though the VA didn't come up with anything, a victory was won. While at the VA, we stressed the fact that Joe's case was typical of the oppression vets face and we unfolded the crisis of imperialism around the example of Joe's case, pointing out who the real enemy is behind all the supervisors.

We used one spokesperson at the action who jammed the bureaucrats while the rest of us kept an eye on the guards and talked to vets and VA workers. We refused to allow the supervisor sidetrack us by getting a few people into a back room where they could tell their lies in private. Their refusal to talk to us as a group exposed their fear of us and the fact that they have nothing concrete to offer vets.

We also successfully united with the workers by pointing out that we were after the supervisors who actually have some control over the benefits. This resulted in some good discussions where VA workers pointed out certain supervisors who were lurking in the shadows, as well as helping us with other information.

We had previously been making the error of not really uniting with veterans around their day-to-day oppression, but in taking up the case of Joe Blanco, we were able to take out our program in a concrete way that will enable veterans to become involved in struggle. In showing the way forward in uniting and fighting for decent benefits for all veterans, and in exposing the VA as part of the system of imperialism, we were able to build a small, but growing, movement of veterans.

We've made some errors in the campaign so far. While the leaflet we used to build for the campaign had a good mass style (an advance over the past), it reflected certain right tendencies by not drawing out the general lessons from Joe's case. Specifically, it should have talked about the crisis of imperialism in the context of what is happening at the VA and it should have had more of our programmatic demands. This was an out-growth of our "whatever works" approach to the action which led us to go into the VA without a good idea of how we were going to bring out our program around the VA. Veterans there are looking for alternatives to the oppression they face and they want to see what we are fighting for in a mass way (not a lecture on socialism, but a setting forth of our general and particular demands and a way to fight back). We need to approach vets with a set of demands, a strategy based on a systematic analysis of what oppression they see and how they can struggle against it. We can't go blindly from one tactic to another---this can easily lead to reformism and opportunism.

This tendency of pragmatism also led to the error of seeing this case in isolation from the other struggles vets face. We want to build a vets movement. To do this, we must use the "single spark can start a prairie fire" method of spreading struggles widely throughout the working class so that vets will take up the fight against their own oppression as well as the oppression of others. We failed to take the case out widely with this in mind, and in fact, ignored some other vets' struggles which could have been built on. The struggles of vets must be firmly rooted in the working class and we must take the specific case and the overall campaign out more broadly to unemployment offices and plants, as well as to the VA.

## VA Horror Stories (cont.)

We all know that the VA has problems. In order to "put a face on the enemy," however, it is useful to be able to deal in the specifics of the VA's treatment of people--the same people it is supposed to be serving. The article in Winter Soldier about the vet "lost" in an elevator is one example of how the VA operates; chapters doing work around the VA by now should have a stack of similar horror stories. They are good to have--and we could use more of them here.

The following letter was written in January by the NYC chapter of VVAW/WSO detailing the case of Ms Ruth Clark, and vividly points out the nature of the VA in its endless paperwork and red tape, all of which is designed to prevent any real service to the people. Ms Clark, the widow of a Vietnam vet, had applied for survivors benefits for her two children, one of whom had recently been found to have a severe bone disease. The chronology of events in this horror story follows:

1. Ms Clark originally applied for benefits for her children at the VA District 7 Office, North Carolina Dept of Veterans Affairs on Dec 28th, 1971. She gave them the children's birth certificates and her husband's death certificate. The documents were returned to her on Feb 10th, 1972 from the Winston-Salem VA Regional Office. When she called the VA she was told that benefits had been disallowed at that time because of the size of the insurance policy which had been left to the children by their father, but that her claim would remain active and that she would be able to get benefits in approximately one year's time.

2. Ms Clark believed that she would be notified when the time period was up, but after she had heard nothing from the VA in nearly a year and a half, she again applied for survivors benefits for the children at the New York Regional VA in the summer of 1974. That application is still on file at the New York VA office. At the initial interview there she was told that there would be no problem getting benefits and that she now qualified. She was also told that her husband's file had to be gotten back from the North Carolina VA where it had been sent at the time of her original application, and that this would take 3 to 4 weeks. The interviewer said that she would be notified when the files came in.

3. In August of 1974, having not heard from the VA she went back to the Regional Office where she was told that the file was nowhere around. She was advised to call the Winston-Salem VA herself (this is a toll call which she paid for herself). On 9/5/74 she called Winston-Salem and was told that they could not find the file on the computer listing, but that it might be misfiled.

4. That day, she called the New York Regional VA and spoke to a Ms Bann in Adjustments and told her of her concern about the missing file. Ms Bann promised to personally look into the matter for her.

5. Two days later, Ms Clark received a letter from MS Bann saying that the file had been located and would be coming into the New York Regional office.

6. Ms Clark heard nothing after this until she again called the VA and spoke to a R. Offer (Veterans Service Officer) who said he would look into it personally. Several days later she received a letter saying that her inquiry had been forwarded to the Winston-Salem VA. This was the last communication she received from the New York VA.

7. On Jan 7th, 1975, Ms Clark again went to the VA and spoke to a Mr Saber, who said that he could not locate Ms Bann or the file. He also said that he would look into it personally. Ms Clark has heard nothing since....



"Take off! Can't you see I'm striking a humanitarian stance?"

#### Palestinian Solidarity Week

The following is a summary of the Palestinian Solidarity Week activities in New York City (May 15-18); the Old Westbury chapter of VVAW/WSO was heavily involved in the planning and work around the week's activities. What follows is their summation:

A teach-in on the Palestinian struggle, Held May 15, 1975, before over 350 people at Columbia University in New York City, marked the launching of Palestinian Solidarity Week. The Cuban Ambassador to the UN, the P. L. O. observer at the UN, a Cambodian comrade, a Vietnamese student, and a Palestinian professor were the featured speakers. The Indochinese comrades talked about the current situations in their respective countries, linked up their own people's struggles for national liberation with that of the Palestinian people, and expressed their strong solidarity with the Palestinian people. These comrades were enthusiastically received.

The speakers also delineated, in detail; the role of Zionism and imperialism in the Middle East and stated that US imperialism would attempt to consolidate its power base and interests in the area because of the shattering blow dealt it by the people of Indochina. Nevertheless, the Palestinian and Arab masses will be victorious over imperialism-Zionism-reaction. The victories in Cambodia and Vietnam are victories for the Palestinian and other oppressed and freedom-loving people in the world.



In addition, a film entitled "MayDay of the Palestinians" was shown following the presentation of some Palestinian culture--songs, dances, rituals and poetry. Security was tight and there were no incidents that night.

On Sunday, May 18th, about 800 people participated in a spirited and strong Palestine Day March and rally in the area near the UN. The march began at Dag Hammersjold Plaza, down 2nd Ave, to 42nd St, up 3rd Ave, over to 1st Ave, and back to the Plaza. The demonstrators stopped for fifteen minutes in front of the Israeli Embassy for a militant show of spirited opposition to the racist, exclusionist state of Israel. Here, the slogans "Palestine yes, Israel No," "Long Live Palestine," "Down with Zionism," and "A Democratic, Non-sectarian State" were raised. Some ten pro-Israeli marchers stood in front of the Embassy, shouting racist, vulgar remarks, giving the finger, and making fools of themselves.

Some of the VVAW/WSO brothers, who were attempting to give strong tactical leadership on security became the object of the wrath built up by the cops toward the demonstrators. The pigs began to push and provoke several VVAW/WSO members, but they pushed back and were ready to battle the pigs who had raised their sticks. The pigs were successful in splitting the march at one point (crossing the biggest intersection) but this was the leadership's responsibility in allowing it to happen.

At the rally countless messages of solidarity from endorsing organizations were read. The statement from VVAW/WSO was very well received. Some of the organizations which endorsed or supported the actions were Eritreans for Liberation in North America, African Youth Movement, ISA, African Information Service, Congress of African People, October League, Revolutionary Student Brigade, the Guardian, Liberation Support Movement--East Coast, Puerto Rican Socialist Party, and sundry unknown and well-known Trotskyite groups and organizations. There were many progressive groups--not listed here--which supported the actions as well.

Opportunism, inexperience, and reaction were evident in various ways. Some people pushed personality cult slogans (e. g. "Long Live Arafat") despite the unresponsiveness of the demonstrators to such slogans. The leadership was liberal in its dealings with the cops, and they refused to go to the streets much earlier than we did. The clash with the police partly resulted from this attitude and action on the leadership's part.

Some of the banners carried demands about political prisoners in Israel and Jordanian nationals. Others declared "Long live People's War, Long live the Palestinian Revolution."

Overall, despite the errors and opportunism of certain elements involved, it was a good demonstration and rally. About half of the participants were Arabs, while the others were of various nationalities (Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Eritreans, Blacks, etc). This was not an amalgam of leftist groups and their supporters. It was Arab masses and interested people who made up this demonstration and rally.

# National Office Reports

## NSCM

The National Steering Committee Meeting is scheduled for Milwaukee on the 3rd through 7th of July. All chapters should have received the initial mailing from Milwaukee (mailed on May 19th; all regional offices should have received the second mailing (mailed on May 24). People who are missing either of these mailings should get in touch with the NO immediately. A third mailing is tentatively scheduled for June 13th.

Each delegation should have selected one delegate to attend the agenda meeting on the evening of July 3; this meeting will propose an agenda for the meeting and work out the details of logistics and security which have not already been taken care of by the Milwaukee chapter. Suggestions for new business, workshops, etc should have been sent to Milwaukee (or phoned in) by now! if you have ideas which have not been given to the Milwaukee organizers for the meeting, do so immediately. A tentative agenda and tentative workshop schedule will go out with the next mailing from Milwaukee.

The NO is in full agreement with the Milwaukee chapter in seeing this meeting as crucially important. From the reports of various regional meetings, and from those meetings which we have attended, we can see the qualitative difference in meetings which have as their goal, unity around the program and goals of building a fighting vets and GI movement. We are looking forward to the same kind of meeting in Milwaukee.

Through reports from regional meetings, we have found a number of questions and topics of discussion which we anticipate will be discussed further in Milwaukee. Are younger vets staying away from the VA in greater and greater numbers? Is VVAW/WSO the right organization to be doing unemployment work? To what extent have vets integrated themselves into the working class? How should Jobs or Income slogans be raised at the VA--or Decent Benefits be raised at the unemployment office? What about the name of the organization now that the war is finally over?

The New York City chapter is trying to organize a campaign around late checks (as a result of the number of people who have been bringing that particular problem to the chapter); they are interested in finding out if the VA sends checks late because there is the possibility of saving some nickels (through interest payments) or whether it is just red tape which holds the checks up. Any work which has been done around this issue and a sum-up of that work should be brought to Milwaukee; people with information now should contact the NYC chapter.

## Mailings --Are You Getting Them?

Two chapters and two regional offices have told us that they have not received the NO paper on the "Two-Line Struggle" which was mailed from here on May 31st by first class mail. If there are other chapters which have not received those documents, let us know immediately; while we understand the general decay of the postal system, we are also aware of various people interested in our mailings and need to know if there is a pattern of messing with the mail.



### National Coordinator Elections

This will be the last notification before the NSCM as to our knowledge of who is running for the position of National Coordinator, and who has declined nomination. There will be three positions open at the July NSCM. Thus far, the only person who has definitely accepted nomination is Barry Romo from Riverside, CA. Those who have officially declined nomination are Brian Adams (of the NO), Bob Anyon (of Denver, Colorado) and Walter Klim (of Milwaukee, Wisconsin). The other two people nominated are Sam Schorr and Pete Zastrow (both of the NO) and final decisions have not been made by them yet, though it is fairly certain that Pete will run again and that Sam will not run.

### VVAW/WSO Buttons

There is a new supply of organizational buttons at the National Office. They are exactly like the most recent VVAW/WSO buttons, which we ran out of a couple of months ago. Several chapters have been requesting the buttons, so this is to notify everyone that the buttons are now here. They cost 10¢ each and chapters should send in their payment along with their order. If chapters want us to bring their order of buttons to the National Steering Committee Meeting, let us know in advance so that we can be sure to have enough there.

### WINTER SOLDIER -- No Color this Month

Enclosed with this newsletter is the June/July issue of WS. During the past 4-5 months, our printing schedule has gotten all jacked out of shape, partly because of a lack of money and partly because of an extremely busy time in the NO. This has meant that the last two issues of the paper have been double issues (April/May and June/July). To get back on schedule, we have printed this most recent issue in early June, with the next issue going to press in mid-July (after the NSCM). Hopefully, after the next issue is printed, we can maintain our schedule of a mid-month publication date, which will mean that the papers will be getting to chapters at the first of each month.

It should be obvious to everyone that this month's issue of the paper is black and white. Several chapters have been saying for some time that the color is not necessary since it is an added expense and doesn't make any difference in terms of selling WS. We did not have a poster this month, so decided it would be a good time to try a black and white issue. The cost of the paper was considerably cheaper as a result. Chapters should discuss the question of color on WS so that we can talk about this in the WINTER SOLDIER workshop at the national meeting. There are many things that must be summed up about the newspaper at the NSCM, and color will be only a small part of the discussion. Hopefully, the papers will reach the regions prior to the NSCM so that we can have some experience in selling the paper to go into this discussion so as to make a better determination of whether or not color helps the paper, or whether it is unnecessary.

Chapters can also help in reducing the cost of the paper by ordering a steady number of papers, rather than fluctuating up and down. One chapter over a three month period went from 800 papers to 2,000 and back to 800. While we are happy that people are selling the paper, these fluctuations are a bit costly, considering that because of the up and down orders, we have this month about twice the number of papers we actually need. SO PLEASE TRY AND KEEP A STEADY ORDER.

#### IPC Letter -

Those of you who read the Michigan Free Press will have noticed that there is a struggle going on within the Indochina Peace Campaign around the direction of their work. One aspect of that struggle is the 'expulsion' of the New York City chapter of IPC; a very progressive part of the IPC. The grounds for that expulsion are that they have been 'taken over' by the Revolutionary Union, and that VVAW/WSO is a shambles because of the participation of the RU in this organization. On this basis, so they say, they don't want the same thing to happen to them.

We think this is pure bullshit, and we feel it important that we respond to these charges to the local IPC chapters, while not making their internal struggles an issue within our organization. Basically, our response just deals with the slanders put forward by their National Standing Committee, which includes the 'radical populist' Tom Hayden. Enclosed with this newsletter is our response and several reprints from the Free Press, which prompted us to write. These letters are being sent to all the local IPC chapters and to you for your information.



Enclosed with the Newsletter are: 1. Winter Soldier 2. May issue of "Inside/Out" 3. Chicago chapter leaflet 4. Letter to IPC and attached reprints. Bulk orders of Winter Soldier were sent out on June 12; GI NEWS should be in the mail on June 18.