

"Hell No" to Rich Man's Wars

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THE VETERAN

Vietnam Veterans Against the War

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EXTEND & EXPAND THE GI BILL!

A vet from a Chicago trade school recently visited the VA to inquire about his late check, only to find that his course of study had lost its VA accreditation. Thousands of veterans across the country far into a new school quarter have yet to see their checks. At Citrus State College in Southern California, the VA audited all vets' records and suspended payments (see story on page 13).

It's not by mere chance that these actions against veterans are occurring at these and thousands of other places around the US. What we as veterans are faced with today is an all-out attack to cut back, limit, and finally eliminate the GI Bill altogether.

On January 21 of this year, Ford's proposed budget was introduced to Con-

gress. It includes a major section on vets including the proposal that the 10-year eligibility period for using educational benefits should be cutback to 8 years (the period of eligibility was extended to 10 years only 8 months ago). There will be "tougher enforcement" to collect money from vets who, the VA claims, have "deviated" from the approved course of study. Additionally, if vets have private health insurance and go to VA hospitals with non-service connected disabilities, they will have to foot the bills. The VA neglected to add that the health insurance payments will probably skyrocket to where the disabled vet can no longer pay them.

The attack on vets is slick. They hit us from both sides. On one side the President and Congress are in the process of cutting off future educational benefits, restricting programs and reducing the amount of time we have to collect the Bill, not to mention cutbacks on disability programs, pensions, and more. On the other side, the amount of money that they give us can't keep up with inflation

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Detroit VVAW Chapter joins with UWOC to expose school ripping off GI Bill from vets.

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Bicentennial Demonstration, see page 2

LOCAL ADDRESS

July 4th Demonstration Coalition Formed

LET'S GET THEM OFF OUR BACKS!

(In the last issue of *The Veteran*, VVAW printed a call to action, asking people to come to Philadelphia on July 4th, 1976. Since that time, a July 4th Coalition has been formed to build for that Bicentennial Demonstration; the following is a statement from the Coalition.)

As all know, the bosses and the politicians are having a big Bicentennial celebration and want everybody to come out July 4 to celebrate the first 200 years of life in this country.

The owning class and their politicians all have a thousand things to say why we working people should go. They page through the history books (the ones they wrote) and say how great things have been, how Washington defeated the British, how Lincoln freed the slaves, how Roosevelt gave us unemployment benefits and unions and "economic security," and on and on. They point to all that's been built in this country--the buildings, cars, railways, planes, bridges--and claim that it's been the Rockefellers and the Fords who've created the wealth of this country.

And then they take a look at the country now and say "Of course, unemployment is high and everything is falling apart, but at least you are free." Constantly, the "common interests" we have in the system is drummed out as they call on us to "rekindle the spirit of '76, make sacrifices, bite the bullet and produce more, so we can all get out of the present crisis."

Fellow workers, to all this we say No, No, a thousand times No! Everything right and decent that has ever been done in this country has been done by us, the working people, who in fact make up the real backbone and the great majority of society. Yes, we working people fought the battles and sacrificed our lives to both defeat the British and end slavery. It has been our hard work and labor that has built up all the wealth in this country. And if we accomplished all this in the past, forced to do it under the conditions of their crazy, dog-eat-dog set up, imagine what we workers could accomplish now if we were free of that.

But we've been robbed of all the fruits of our labor by that class of parasites that runs the government and all of society for their profits and their luxury. And even the gains of our struggle, like our unions, they try to turn against us. What is this "common interest" between us and the owners? For 200 years our hard work and all it has produced has carried a small handful of bosses and enabled them to live in riches and luxury, while this constant drive for profit has held back our labor from being used to meet the needs of millions. Nothing has ever been handed to us by them. Everything we ever got we had to fight for, even in so-called "good times."



Thousands demonstrate in Washington, D.C., July 4, 1974.

What Is Our Lot?

Yes, fellow workers, we have worked and struggled hard for 200 years and what is our lot? Increasing crisis, in which want and misery lie heavily on our shoulders, unemployment is our constant companion, and once again the threat of war, yes, even world war, hangs menacingly over our heads. Now in this 200th year the bosses and politicians are hoping they can cool off our anger and our struggle against these conditions by trying to play off our genuine feelings of pride in our hard work and its accomplishments. This is what's really the point of their Bicentennial blitz and the calls for us to come to a July 4th festival in Philadelphia to celebrate life under this system which enables them to live like kings.

We will be in Philly on July 4th, but not to celebrate this system that keeps us locked in their chains of profits. For on this day of their glorious celebration, the so-called high and mighty will be confronted by those they rob and rule. Thousands of workers employed and unemployed, veterans, youth, students and many others will be coming together to unite their struggles against the common enemy. Coming out of the different struggles we wage every day throughout the country--in factories, unemployment centers and the communities, to unite around the slogan and banner that truly reflects the sentiments of the American people toward the bosses and politicians, "We've carried the rich for 200 years. Let's get them off our backs!"

It is in this spirit that the Vietnam Veterans Against the War put out the original call for a nationwide march and rally on July 4th in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee has since endorsed the rally, along with many other fighting workers'

organizations. Now a July 4th Coalition has formed, made up of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee, Revolutionary Communist Party, Revolutionary Student Brigade and others--to build for a rally and demonstration that will unite thousands of people from all parts of the country to take on the rulers on their supposed day of glory and celebration. The two key demands to be raised at the rally are "Jobs or Income Now!" and "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War!"

Regional Conferences

As an important first step in building for the rally, the Coalition is calling regional conferences in Philadelphia and Cincinnati. Conferences that will unite workers from many cities, industries and different battlefronts. Coming out of the many battles we wage day after day, we can discuss and sum up how to build a powerful July 4th rally that will bring out thousands of working people and truly reflect the hatred and anger of the millions of American people for these rotten rulers. These will be working conferences, organized mainly into workshops to come up with concrete plans for building struggle among unemployed workers, employed workers, veterans and youth--summing up our experiences in building these battles and how we can build for the rally as part of continuing to move these struggles forward. Throughout the discussions, workshops and the entire conference we'll seek to forge the unity necessary to go back to develop further the battles in the factories, mines and unemployment centers throughout the country while building towards a powerful rally and action in Philly on July 4th. A rally that will further develop the unity and common struggle of the working class throughout the country so we can continue to move forward our movement and struggle against the bloodsuckers who rule over us.

(Continued on page 3)

DETROIT TRADE SCHOOL HIT

VETS DEMAND ADEQUATE TRAINING & JOBS



**MEMBERS OF DETROIT VVAW & UWOC
AT RIP-OFF SCHOOL DEMO**

Vets are used once (by the rich to fight their wars) and then thrown away (when we can't even get the benefits we were promised). But there are some institutions which would like to see vets used twice--once in a rich man's war and then again so that the institution can squeeze some bucks out of us through the GI Bill.

In Detroit, the VVAW chapter took on the "International Transportation Institute" (ITI) where, for only \$2000 you can get a VA approved, 3-week course in driving trucks. The advertising which the institute uses says that "3 out of 4 people trained by ITI find employment after training." They advertised, for instance, that Chrysler needed 350 big rig drivers at the same time Chrysler was in fact laying off the drivers they had.

All over the country, everything from newspapers to TV to matchbook covers advertise schools which are "approved for veterans." All of these schools speak to a real need of vets--we have to have jobs, and they're hard to come by, particularly when we're looking for a job which pays enough to support us and our families. They government statistics say that unemployment has fallen to "only" 7.5%; their figures lie. For instance, they conveniently leave out all the people whose unemployment compensation has run out; in fact, at least one out of ten

JULY 4th cont'd

Fellow workers, these demands are just demands, our fight is a just fight.

We are the only ones who can push things forward, and we are determined to break through.

"We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years. Let's Get Them Off Our Backs"

(The Regional Conferences were being held at the time the paper went to press. For more information about local activities and building actions, contact your local VVAW chapter or the VVAW National Office.)

people who want to work can't find jobs. For vets, especially younger vets, that figure is even higher.

Seeing the economic crisis, and seeing the bind that many vets are in, some schools use these conditions to pimp off vets by trotting out their phoney promises in hopes of trapping vets and ripping off their money. And vets need jobs bad enough to go into these schools.

The Detroit VVAW chapter joined forces with the Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC) to stage a demonstration outside the offices of this particular rip-off school. While they were picketing outside the school, they were joined by several truck drivers. "I had a graduate from this school working with me," said one of the drivers; "He didn't even know how to turn on the ignition." Two weeks later, VVAW and UWOC took the demonstration to the Regional VA office to demand that the VA stop approving this kind of rip-off school.

After discussing the demonstrations, the chapter decided that their approach had been wrong. And the way that the VA managed to sneak out of any kind of responsibility made the mistake clear. As carried in one of the Detroit newspapers, the VA response was that they would be careful about who they approved in the future. According to the VA Director, "I

can't say that we've done that in the past (checked to verify information provided to the VA by the schools), but I can tell you that we're certainly going to do it now." Already in some parts of the country, the VA is dropping the accreditation of schools and throwing vets enrolled in them off the GI Bill. Vets don't need any more of that; what we need is jobs or the training necessary to get jobs.

Nor can we let the VA slide away from its responsibility that easily. We can all see there are jobs that need to be done, everything from repairing roads to working to straighten out VA records. The VA is just one part of the government which functions in the interests of the rich and cuts back whenever there aren't profits to be made. VVAW can and should demand jobs--jobs from the VA, jobs from the government, jobs from the capitalist bosses for whom the government now operates.

The VA can't choose our schools for us by accrediting what they like and dropping schools they don't like; this, like other petty restrictions written into the GI Bill, must go. And we don't need rip-off schools like ITI in Detroit that sucks us into their sham schools playing on our real needs for decent paying jobs. Vets need the ability to get the training which will help get good jobs and a GI Bill which is adequate to pay for that training.

UNEMPLOYED JOIN DEMO CALL

The UNEMPLOYED WORKERS' ORGANIZING COMMITTEE, with fighting organizations growing in 30 major cities across the country, today stated that we join with VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR and, along with this organization, sends out the call: JOIN US JULY 4TH in PHILADELPHIA to represent our real feelings and intentions. At this time and this event, no amount of their grandstand double-talk can cover up the serious crisis and the conditions of our lives today. And all this talk is consciously designed to create the impression that the talkers wish to convey... that all is well and that they are taking care of and represent our needs. This is so far from the truth. They have never done so. They push the unreality of "we're all in the same family" - "no difference between us - rulers and ruled - workers and owners"... where is the reality of that? To those of us out of work this "no difference" is the difference between having to live and not having. The facts can't be hidden. Though we workers have built all there is in this country of ours, we now face lives of great destitution and starvation. We face working conditions so bad we may not survive them. Is this something to celebrate? Is this something to rush to say "200 years of the greatest?" True, we helped to defeat and send the British running - and it was

our forefathers who were working people that did this. True, we aim to live lives of all for one and one for all - YES! this is our goal. But we have learned much since the beginning. All our winnings we've fought for - our blood, our sacrifice, our sweat and toil and our working class unity and action has been our strength and power. 200 years of producing. Now, after 5 to 35 years of work, we are told "You think you should have income? You think you should have a job?" And what job do we get offered? Minimum wage or less and only for a few. Or a uniform in the military, a job they push at us on the employment lines these days as the job that's around! To keep this way of life going and protect their wealth, they want us to go to war and keep them afloat. We know who makes the sacrifices in their wars, and it isn't them. **ALONG WITH VVAW, UNEMPLOYED WORKERS ALL OVER ARE SAYING: "WE WON'T FIGHT ANOTHER RICH MAN'S WAR!"**

UWOC chapters all across the country are building for July 4th. Hundreds of thousands of signatures on our petitions will express our immediate demands - will say we do not deal with the source of our misery... **JOBS OR INCOME... WE'VE CARRIED THE RICH FOR 200 YEARS - LET'S GET THEM OFF OUR BACKS!**

Plans for Bicentennial, GI Bill Campaign

VVAW NATIONAL MEETING

Build the Fighting Vets Movement!
Build the Bicentennial Demonstration!
Build VVAW! These were the overall aims of the 16th National Steering Committee Meeting of Vietnam Veterans Against the War. The meeting was held in Chicago on February 14th and 15th and brought together veterans in the organization from Boston to Los Angeles.

Members of VVAW and observers from vets clubs and other organizations discussed in workshops how we will build the bicentennial demonstration in Philadelphia on July 4th and how we can build the fighting veterans movement on the campuses, the VA hospitals, the VA offices and on the unemployment lines. A workshop was also held on the danger of war between the two superpowers--the US and the Soviet Union-- and how VVAW should use its experience of fighting in an unjust war to oppose and expose any new rich man's war.

At the beginning of the meeting speeches were given by organizations that VVAW has worked with: Unemployed Workers Organizing Committee (UWOC), the Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB), and the Revolutionary Communist Party (RCP). UWOC and the RSB talked about their work and told how they were going to build for the demonstration in Philadelphia. The speaker from the RCP talked about the significance of this demonstration and brought home the point that we've carried the rich for 200 years and let's get them off our backs, which is the overall slogan of the demonstration.

Build the Fighting Vets Movement!

As the meeting began, the VVAW National Office gave a speech putting forward its views on building the fighting vets movement. "All around us we can see the effects of the economic crisis being thrown primarily on the backs of working people and the American people in general.... This becomes increasingly clear to us as vets, with the deteriorating care at VA hospitals, the attack on the present GI Bill and the high unemployment among vets.

"VVAW work has been good as we struggle for open hearings at the VA, demand jobs or income, call for a halt in disability cutbacks. But at the same time, our work has been scattered. The National Office has discussed this, and we believe that the development of a national campaign is necessary. We believe that this should center around extending and expanding the GI Bill. This is not a call to drop struggles we are involved in to become a student/vet organization, but because of the concentration of vets on campus, and their day-to-day relationship to

schools allows us the opportunity to develop consistent relationships with vets in struggle."

We are taking up a campaign to extend and expand the GI Bill, not as a gimmick to draw vets together, but because we see the attacks on it as typical of how the ruling class is trying to tighten its grip on the working people of this country. The GI Bill cutbacks, at this time, are a clear example of how this rich man's system is specifically attacking veterans. We need a good GI Bill and we are out to get it.

At the meeting it was decided that we should begin a petition campaign demanding a decent GI Bill. This petition will enable us, along with our other work, to reach thousands of veterans who want and need good educational benefits. It was decided that the petitions would not be given to any politicians, or government agency who would like to see us grovel at their feet, begging for crumbs. Over the years we have learned that politicians would listen to us with one ear while they bent over sideways dropping everything we say out of their other ear into the nearest trash basket. Our petition is for the thousands of veterans that sign them and for the working people of this country who see the attacks on the GI Bill as another attack on all of us.

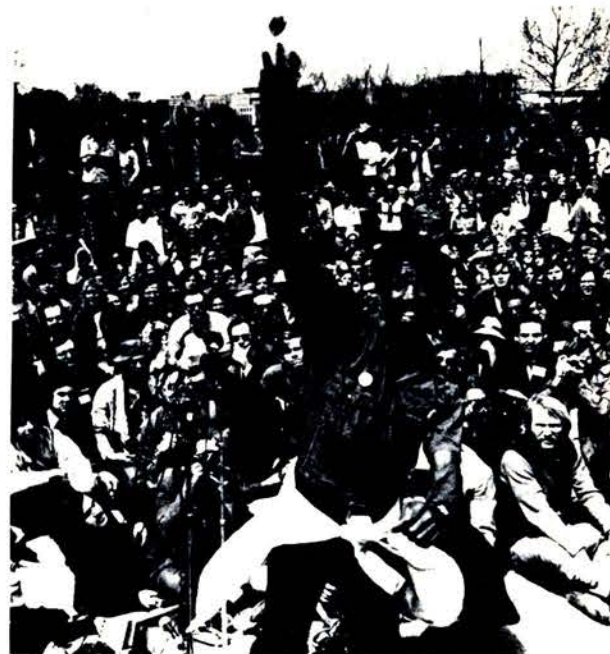
By relying on veterans across the country and by uniting with their anger at getting shafted again and again, we will build a strong vets movement aiming its blows at the rulers of this country. Through this we can not only win a decent GI Bill, but get decent health care in VA hospitals, gain decent employment and at the same time expose and attack their rotten system that leeches off of all working people in this country.

It is possible that we may not win all of our demands. But that won't keep us from fighting as hard and as long as we can. Only by fighting together do we have the strength to win anything at all. And in the course of this fighting, we will lay bare the bankruptcy of this system.

As vets, we aren't in this battle alone. While we build our movement we have got to link it up with the struggles of other people. This was clear to everyone at the NSCM and one way in which this will be done is to join with other organizations in pointing our finger at our common enemy.

Build the Demonstration!

In the last issue of THE VETERAN we put out a call for the bicentennial demonstration and since that time the



VVAW 16th National Meeting, which pointed toward Bicentennial demonstration, took place 5 years after the first national meeting which planned Operation Dewey Canyon III.

RSB, UWOC, the RCP and the NY-NJ United Workers Organization have joined with us. Uniting behind the slogan, "We've Carried the Rich for 200 Years; Let's Get Them Off Our Backs!" we will be attacking the system where it is weakest -- around jobs and the danger of war. These two great sores affect all people, vets and non-vets alike. We answer these attacks by raising the demands "Jobs or Income Now" and "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War."

At the NSCM we took up the demonstration in a big way, and we dealt with the question of how VVAW should build for it. Initially we had a tendency to look at the demo as VVAW's even though we put out a call to other organizations. But because these two demands are demands of the great majority of the American people, we now understand the importance of not viewing it as a "vets demo", but instead, seeing that it is a demonstration that will unite workers, both employed and unemployed, youth, students and vets together to expose the rulers of this country and their rotten system by facing them head on in Philadelphia while they celebrate this country's bicentennial talking about how great the USA is and how 'free' we all are. Yeah, free to suffer from lack of jobs and threats of war.

VVAW will be building for the demonstration, but the whole idea of fighting for decent benefits cannot be viewed as our major rallying cry in building for it. Vets are one group of working people that suffers from these two great sores of the system, and therefore we stand with others to unite our energies to attack the

FIGHT FOR EVERY JOB

CETA VETS SEIZE BUILDING



New York City VVAW unites vets in Vets Day Demonstration, 1975.

New York City's a mess. In the mad scramble to try to hold on to their profitable investments, the city's bankers, politicians and "civic leaders" have done all they can to push the city's crisis on to the people of the city. Job cutbacks--in essential services like firemen or teachers--increased taxes, slashes in services all are part of the formula pushed by the rich in order to save their economic skins.

Like other New Yorkers, vets have been hard hit. And like other people around the city, vets are fighting back. In December, the city Manpower and Career Development Agency announced that 11,000 jobs under the CETA (Comprehensive Education and Training Act) program were being eliminated. This program, subsidized by the federal government, is designed to employ what they call the "hard-core unemployed"--which reads out as those whom the rich man's system cannot provide jobs for. The official reason given for firing these workers--the cuts were to start on the 30th of January and go on until June at the rate of 1800 per

month--was the rehiring of some policemen, firemen and sanitation workers.

When vets at City College of New York (CCNY) heard about the cutbacks (there were 60 part-time jobs for vets funded under the program at the college) they united and planned a sit-in at the college administration building. At a meeting prior to the sit-in, VVAW offered to support the action, and the offer was accepted.

At 8:30 on the morning of December 22nd, some 20 vets, members of the newly formed Veterans Against CETA Cuts, took over the administration building, demanding that the college President, Robert Marshak, take a position against the CETA cuts as well as come out against the plans for a tuition at previously free New York City colleges. The vets held the building until their demands for a meeting with the President were met at 4 o'clock

in the afternoon. A group of 50 protesters and leafletters, including members of the New York City VVAW, supported the action outside the building.

The position of the college administration, like that of the government of the city of New York, is shakey; they apparently decided they could not afford to force the vets out of the building. They did try the tactic of divide and conquer, however. Seventy-five students on the Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge (SEEK) program were due to get their monthly payments at the administration building. In fact, one of the New York newspapers, mouthing the line of the college administration, reported that the SEEK students were furious at being "turned away from the building by the veterans." In fact, vets united immediately with the SEEK students by telling the administration to send the SEEK staff into the building to pick up the checks. The administration refused, but after SEEK students marched on their "temporary" offices, the administration changed its mind. Another device to divide the people failed.

In fact the whole CETA cutback was pushed as a way to pit rehired city workers--the firemen, sanitation men, policemen--against CETA workers. The city government tried to say that they could hire only one or the other, but not both. As described in the last issue of *The Veteran*, the crisis of the city of New York is the direct result of mammoth interest payments which have been piling up over the years (for instance, one elevated train system is still being paid for though the tracks have been torn down for years). That's why the bankers and their cronies are so interested in "solving the crisis"--and they're trying to do it by pushing the crisis on the people of the city. They are trying to make it look like a choice between CETA workers and civil servants in an attempt to divert attention from the real issue--the need of people for jobs, as opposed to the need of the capitalists for interest payments and profits.

But, programs like CETA were won

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National Meeting, cont'd

rulers of this country most effectively during this bicentennial year--not just as veterans, but as part of the powerful fist of all working people.

VVAW will be building for the demonstration in coalition with other organizations planning forums, rallies and taking out UWOC's national petition for jobs, and exposing the danger of war. Many vets at the meeting said that around jobs and war, that VVAW has a lot to contribute. For vets, unemployment is very real--for example, younger vets face about 20% unemployment. And around war, many vets have first hand experience of what rich man's war is all about. VVAW will be taking this out to vets across the country, pointing our finger at the rich who exploit us, and saying all the time, "We've carried the rich for 200 years; let's get them off our backs!"

Build VVAW!

The 16th NSCM came just about five

years to the date after the first NSCM held in 1971. Five years ago we came together as a national organization for the first time to build a vets movement against the war in Indochina. At that meeting we planned for a demonstration in Washington DC and it was this demonstration, Dewey Canyon III, that drew over a thousand veterans who threw their war medals in disgust at the Capitol Building to say we wanted the war to end.

Now, five years later, we met again to unite with others to build a powerful demonstration to tell the whole system and its rulers that we want them off our backs, and to build a veterans movement capable of getting all vets together to fight for decent lives. During those five years we've had successes and setbacks, but we've learned much from our experiences and we continue to move forward.

As the National Office speech stated, "We have developed a better understanding of the struggles of veterans and have developed a program drawn out of our struggle that can help unite vets, build the veterans movement, and involve veterans not just in their hundreds, but in their millions."

Once We Fought For Them; Now Our Fight's Against Them

VETS SAY NO TO RICH'S WAR

Vietnam and Cambodia were liberated less than a year ago. Since that time we've seen US "technicians" stationed in the Sinai, turmoil in Portugal, civil war in Lebanon, and foreign meddling in the war in Angola. One crisis calms down only to have another crisis erupt.

Angola is both the most recent and the clearest example of what's happening. For centuries the Angolan people were kept under the heel of Portuguese colonialists, kept in poverty and misery, and driven like slaves to fill the pockets of their Portuguese "masters." Angola's vast resources, including large oil and diamond deposits have never gone to improve the life of the people, but have always been ripped off to benefit foreign powers. Like people everywhere, the Angolan people resisted this exploitation and oppression. In the last 12 years, they waged an heroic struggle which helped topple the Portuguese government and won independence for Angola. Today, less than a year after the Portuguese left, Angola is again occupied by foreign troops, this time by thousands of Cuban soldiers under orders from Soviet "advisors." Even though the MPLA forces have won the war, there's no sign of Cuban troops leaving; in fact, at last count the 12,000 Cuban troops in Angola were bringing their families to join them there as a permanent army of occupation.

In the US, the government spokesmen and their media mouthpieces wail and scream about Russian expansionism in Africa. Roy Innis of CORE and the CIA recruit mercenary troops to fight against the MPLA (see attached story) saying it's like the anti-fascist wars of the 1930's. Even Ronald Reagan talks about "Soviet imperialism" in Africa.

On the other side, leaders of the Soviet Union and Cuba, and some people here in the US, present a far different picture. They speak about their "internationalist duty" to help Angola; they say they are preventing the Angolans from trading one colonialist master (Portugal) for another (the US) and keeping out the rotten racists from South Africa. And now that the conflict is pretty much over, they will keep their troops there to "insure" the independence of Angola.

What it amounts to is two sets of international gangsters who each present a part of the truth. Through their various spokesmen, agents and propagandists, they bend the truth to paint themselves as "defenders of the oppressed" while the other is labelled as the "imperialist warmonger." Each country speaks the truth in calling the other imperialist, colonialist, and expansionist; each carefully omits the truth about itself--that it, too, is imperialist, colonialist and expansion-



Cuban Officer Instructs MPLA Troops

ist. Each carries out the same policy and is guided by the same laws; each uses a different cover. The US cloaks itself in rhetoric about freedom and democracy while the Soviet Union covers itself with talk about the working class and socialism. Yet, despite the rhetoric, they act the same; in each case, they have no interest in permitting the Angolans to decide for themselves what their own future should be.

Angola is far from unique. In just the last year, there's been one superpower confrontation after another. In the Middle East, the US won a couple of points by getting US "technicians" stationed along the Sinai; in Portugal, the Soviet Union seemed to have its puppet Communist Party well in control for awhile, only to see it undermined; in Angola, a couple of points for the Soviet Union. These are only the most blatant instances of the two superpower parasites sticking their hands in other peoples' backyards.

Yes, they constantly talk about "détente" (or Ford's newer version, "Peace through Strength"), but we just have to look at the defense budgets to see what a farce that is. B-1 bombers, MIRV's, Tridents, weapons of awesome destruction too secret to have public names, all point to the danger of war as the US and USSR more and more come into direct conflict all around the world. Caught in the middle are not only the people of Angola, Portugal, and the Middle East; the danger of another world war growing out of these constant crises is something that affects everyone in the world.

Look at the Soviet Union for a moment. They parade around as a socialist system--which they once were--and a country run by the working class--which was also once true. But not anymore. There isn't much difference, when you get right down to it, between Breshnev and his cronies riding around in Cadillac limousines and living off the sweat and blood of the Russian workers; and the Rockefellers, the Duponts, or the Mel-

longs. The Soviet Union has huge armies outside their borders just like the US; and they'll go into Czechoslovakia just like the US will charge into the Dominican Republic.

And then there's the US. The US rulers have been making a big fuss about the Bicentennial and our history of freedom and defending democracy at home and abroad. That barrage keeps going day and night, and will get louder. But we, as veterans, especially vets of the Indochina war, know better. Democracy in Vietnam meant keeping a corrupt dictator in power and using this puppet as an excuse to subjugate half of Vietnam. Freedom there meant freedom for American corporations to exploit the natural resources of the country and use it as a base to attack neighboring countries. At home, freedom means the freedom of the rich to speed us up to squeeze more profits out of us, freedom for them to lay us off, freedom for them to cut social services we need like VA hospitals, disability checks--and freedom for us to starve on an inadequate GI Bill. Or freedom for us to mark our tax forms to give some bigmouth turkey a buck to speak for the rich.

Two superpowers driven by the need for profit, exploiting their working people at home while seeking markets and raw resources abroad, they come into conflict with each other. And this conflict threatens to lead the world into another world war, a war to divide and re-divide the world.

Of course, they don't stand up and say "We're robbers--what we want is what you've got." Instead, they cover it up with sugary words and maybe a couple of bribes to the right officials. It's constantly, "We're your friends, just trying to help you out." Well, in Vietnam that "help" was over a decade of bloody war; in Angola, that "help" is a Cuban occupation force.

The line's getting old. The Russian people aren't our enemies, any more than the Vietnamese people were our enemies. They're exploited as much as we are. There's a ruling class in the Soviet Union, just like here, which is doing the exploiting of the Russian people. And the rich who run the system in the US aren't going to get us to save their skins just because they speak English or because they tell us that they're the "lesser of two evils." We're saying that we're not going to fight another rich man's war. And if the US rulers get into a war, especially if they get into a world war with all the suffering that means for the world's people, we're not going to fight it for them. Our fight's against the rich and their wars.



Iranian students in New York City protest Shah's murder of 9 Iranian patriots.

Recently, hundreds of Iranian students, across the country and in Europe went on hunger strikes, held rallies and vigils, and marched in demonstrations. This storm of protest was triggered when the Shah of Iran jailed nine revolutionaries and sentenced them to death (without a trial) for the killing of two US "military officers," well known to be CIA agents. Despite this world-wide protest, the nine were executed on January 23rd.

A member of the Iranian Students Association (ISA), which sponsored the actions, explained that the protests are part of the huge upsurge of the Iranian people against the brutal dictatorship of the Shah. A wave of struggle was touched off about six months ago when the Shah ordered that a great leader of the people's struggle against the dictatorship (who had been imprisoned for the last five years) be put to death. The killing of the two CIA agents was in retaliation for his execution.

IRANIAN STUDENTS COMBAT SHAH'S REPRESSION

Iran is a middle Eastern country located in the oil-rich Persian Gulf area. Because of the wealth of oil concentrated there, US monopoly corporations (especially the oil companies) decided long ago that they needed a ruler who would protect and further their interests in the region. They found "their boy" in the Shah, who was put in power through a CIA-directed coup in 1953. Now US investments control 80% of the economy, and during the last five years the US government has given the Shah \$22 billion worth of military equipment and weapons. Additionally, there are about 1,000 military advisors and technicians stationed in Iran and about 19,000 other Americans who serve US businesses in one capacity or another.

Iran has an income of approximately \$20 billion per year from oil revenues, but the living conditions of the people are practically unbearable. The unemployment rate is approximately 35% and the people live in poverty and misery while the Shah and his cohorts stuff their shirts with incomes and the US companies syphon billions in profit from Iran's resources.

These conditions have given rise to

tremendous resistance to the Shah's regime. In order to clamp down on this resistance, the Shah has resurrected the "Black Laws of 1310", which state that anyone who protests against the regime will be sentenced from 3-10 years in jail and that anyone leading organized opposition will be executed.

There are many similarities between the struggle of the Iranian people and the fight of the Indochinese people against US domination. Veterans who were in Vietnam saw just what US military forces were doing there and saw in whose interests we were serving--- and it wasn't for the great majority of people but rather for Thieu and his clique, who were puppets for US corporations. The Indochinese people for years fought against foreign intervention and against the rulers of their country who were exploiting and oppressing them. Even though Iran doesn't have thousands and thousands of foreign troops stationed there, the same conditions exist where the Shah and his regime serve the interests of US business and use terrorism against the Iranian workers and peasants.

But the terrorism won't stop the people from fighting their oppression. The killings of the nine revolutionaries will not end resistance to the regime. The continuing demonstrations of the ISA attest to this fact and accurately reflect the growing struggle of the Iranian people.

CIA \$\$ BANKROLL ATTEMPT VETS RECRUITED FOR ANGOLA

In February, Roy Innis, one-time director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) was on radio and TV and in newspapers all over the country asking for Black Vietnam veterans to go to Angola to fight. He was not looking for "mercenaries," he said, but for patriotic men to go to fight against the Soviet Union, the Cubans, and their allies in the MPLA. It would be the same as the anti-fascist volunteers who went to Spain to fight against Franco and the other fascists in the 1930s. Here was a chance, he said, "to assist anti-Communist forces as combat medics" and fight on the right side, unlike Vietnam "where the US government was backing a corrupt dictator."

When he began recruiting, the war in Angola was going hot and heavy with new reports each day about mercenary troops and Cuban troops being poured into the battles. Now that the MPLA has taken the country, Innis says that his recruiting efforts won't stop. "The real war will be the guerrilla war that is coming," he says. He wants the US government to turn Angola into Russia's Vietnam.

Of course, the "combat medics" are just a convenient way to get around legal difficulties. "There are narrow legalities involved," says Innis. "I am sending medical personnel who happen to be combat veterans of Vietnam or Korea to aid UNITA." Stripped of all the pretense, Innis is recruiting Vietnam vets to do the fighting in Angola.

CORE has never had close ties with any of the forces in Angola's war; nor would Innis deny that the money necessary to pay these troops was coming from the CIA. In fact, according to a British newspaper, the CIA allocated \$49.2 million for arms, supplies, and troops in a desperate attempt by the US government to prevent their arch-rival, the Soviet Union, from gaining a foothold in this part of Africa. And even though the US rulers try to cover over their relations with the racist regime in South Africa, they were willing to work openly with the South African government to try to bolster the UNITA forces.

It's true, as Innis says, that the Soviet Union and Cuban troops have no busi-

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Medical Combat Exp Pref'd.

Ad for "Combat Medics" in New York newspaper, a cover for CIA-hired mercenaries.

ness whatever in Angola. But it's equally true that Innis, the CIA, and the US government have no business there either. Neither do Black Vietnam vets, whether they're called mercenaries or not.

Innis is also speaking the truth about the way vets--all vets--were used by the government to back a corrupt dictator in Vietnam. The solution to that problem, however, is not to be used once more, this time by the US ruling class in their greedy competition with their counterparts in the Soviet Union. Veterans, Black and white, have been used once by the rich--and once is more than enough.

"Our Unity And Action I VA CUTBACKS T

There appears to be a popular trend in the media today to criticize, expose, and otherwise trash the Veterans Administration. The last six months has brought a steady flow of articles and report such as the major series in the Chicago Tribune that dominated the front page for over a week. Suddenly the spotlight is on the horrid VA hospitals, late checks and on and on.



Milwaukee VVAW members jam hearing room at VA

Aside from the hell that millions of vets get put through by the VA recent events, like the deaths of VA patients at the Ann Arbor VA hospital, have raised a cry of indignation from the press. After numerous articles, the conclusion reached in nearly every case is that the VA is either too big a mess to straighten out or it should be abolished and its services scattered to other federal agencies.

Spend a day at a VA office, talk to vets at any college, visit a VA hospital. It won't take long to arrive at the conclusion that the VA doesn't work, nor will it ever in all probability.

The VA constitutes the third largest bureaucracy in the federal government. Founded in 1930, Congress established the VA to administer to veteran's needs. The VA quickly developed into a huge agency that selectively passes out benefits to those veterans they find acceptable. The top VA posts are kept within a very tight circle, appointed by the President.

The chief qualification for the top post of the VA is to be, or to have been, a national commander of one of the big veteran organizations, like the VFW or the American Legion, and to have faithfully carried out the tasks of promoting wars, pointedly trying to separate vets from other people and carrying out the work of the rich who run this country.

Richard Roudebush, the current VA Czar is no exception to this procedure of

selection. A former national commander of the VFW and a member of Congress for 10 years, Roudebush's most notable achievement in Congress was the creation of Flag Day. His work in the VA has been an unparalleled attack upon the benefits of veterans. Roudebush's cooperation with those who seek to cutback and dismantle the VA and his skillful manipulation of the yes-men leadership of the VFW, etc., has earned him the respect of the class he represents--the rich.

The VA with a 1976 budget of \$18 billion continues to plod along. Rather than meeting the needs of veterans, the VA is systematically cutting back its services in several major areas. The VA is fully behind the current plan to cutback the GI Bill for vets and eliminate it entirely for future vets. Top level bureaucrats of the VA have convinced the leadership of the large veterans organizations to give the nod to this attack. One example of this is with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). The leadership of the DAV is currently calling on the rank and file membership to support the GI Bill cutoff. In one article in the February, 1976 issue of the DAV magazine, John J. Keller, National Director of Services even went so far to say that if you have your benefits cut its probably due to your own neglect and not the VAs.

Keller and his cohorts in other large vet's organizations are promising their respective rank and file a better time at the VA, if they help cut the throats of some other vets. We in VVAW have been at the VA offices and hospitals too many times to swallow this crap.

Take the case of the Korean vet who lost his leg on a land mine in Korea. His records indicate it isn't a service connected disability. Do the DAV, VFW, or American Legion officers at the VA do anything for him? Only if he raises hell. Then the VA director in that particular office will call them in to calm him down, promising to look into the case and the old "don't worry, we'll get in touch when something develops with your case" routine. Confronted with these and other stories, these vet pimps shrug their shoulders and say "well, these things happen, but for the most part, the VA takes good care of vets." We say this is bull!

The VA has had its problems for years but is now totally unable to meet the needs of the 29.1 million vets. Vietnam-era vets, unable to find work or any source of income are turning to the VA in record numbers. WWII vets, some in their 60s and 70s are becoming more and more dependent on the VA.

Just about every area of VA assistance has its particular but inter-related problems. These are several areas of the VA that are outstanding in their non-functioning.

CLAIMS - The words red-tape seem to be the universal feeling that vets have for the claims procedure at any VA facility. After waiting for hours in the reception room, the vet is told to fill out some paperwork and wait hoping they can find his records. Each VA facility has a staff of ten or more people who spend 8 hours a day trying to find lost records. According to a recent government survey, the VA uses 10,000 different form letters, pushes out 75 million pages of mail a year and spends \$11 million on notes to itself. To handle this mountain of paperwork the VA has "skillfully" set up a system of 33 computers nationwide, in a pattern that appears to have been created by a group of drunks throwing darts at a map of the US. In typical fashion the VA expects to have this problem cleared up by 1980 with a new computer system. Hell, we can't wait that long!

LATE CHECKS - Every month hundreds of thousands of vets wonder where their education and disability checks are. Don't ask the VA--how would they know? Some of us don't see them the entire time we're in school.

The VA responded to the problem of late checks by setting up a \$25 million a year program during the summer of 1974 to deal with late checks. Today, almost two years after the program was initiated it has proven to be a failure. When the program began an employee of the VA in



Milwaukee VVAW

Is Our Strength And Power" THREATEN VETS

Milwaukee taped a 7-way phone conversation of VA "heavies". The phone session dealt mostly with the need to establish a "vet-rep" program on campuses to head off militant vets with the stated purpose of "winning these vets back to having confidence in the VA." The vet-rep program is a bust and the checks are still late.

DISABILITIES - Everyday thousands of vets are having their disability payments cut to ribbons. Constant re-evaluation procedures by the VA are dropping the pay and eligibility scales. Vets are notified by mail of their re-examination. If the notification arrives late, the vet will lose most, if not all, of his monthly checks. Once the VA rules on a disability it is next to impossible to change it. The VA states their decisions are "final and conclusive and no other official or any court" can review them. It is nearly impossible for a vet to hire a lawyer for his case because a rule limits a lawyer's fee for a VA case to \$10. To this the VA counters that "lawyers aren't necessary because we have vets organizations (VFW etc.) to provide representation for us."

The VA certainly didn't give those yes-men offices in the VA because of their history of struggle for all vets. VVAW has taken up cases of vets around the country to fight for their disabilities and have won them, but with each case it took days of preparation. There are too many cases to fight them individually. Realizing this we took up these cases to build the unity among vets and to show that only through that unity can we struggle against the VA to win many cases, not just one at a time.



at VA Demonstration

HEALTH CARE & VA HOSPITALS - Healthcare at many of the 171 VA hospitals is shoddy at best. Some of the 171 hospitals are considered "spit and polish" showcases for visiting dignitaries, while a hospital in another part of the same state is a rat-hole built in the 1890s.

In nearly every case the quality of healthcare is under par. This doesn't reflect upon the workers and staff of these hospitals. In most cases they do the best they can despite understaffing, hard working conditions and crummy administration. VA workers in several cases have been outspoken about the VA situation. In one case, at the Allen Park VA near Detroit, a nursing assistant, Tim Wells, was fired for speaking out against hospital conditions and abuse of patients.

The following letter from a VA employee in California speaks to the current "reorganization" (cutbacks) in VA hospitals around the country.

"The Joint Commission of Accreditation of Hospitals is now reviewing all VA hospitals. So far, two VA hospitals have failed (this review) and have been put on a year's probation. They are in San Diego and Sepulveda. Probation means that they have one year to correct (their) problems. If not, they lose all student interns, nurses, residents, work-study people, etc.

"If hospitals do not pass, it will mean a general breakdown in services and a chance for the VA to start massive cutbacks. Taking the Long Beach VA as an example, there are an average of 15-20 operations daily. This would be drastically reduced if there were a cutback, since a majority of the surgeons on each team are student interns and residents.

"The VA's response to these threatened closures is classic. Instead of trying to find the root cause for the failure of the hospitals in San Diego and Sepulveda it is resorting to trying to pass future reviews by making sure its paperwork is together."

The VA has submitted its fiscal year 1977 budget to Congress for approval. It has cut its budget by \$1.3 billion from 1976. The biggest cut will be on the GI Bill Education and Training Program. Additionally, the budget request shows a \$95.8 million reduction for compensation and pension payments with future cuts promised.

All this while a record number of vets, particularly younger vets face the highest unemployment since the Great Depression. The year 1975 also brought the highest number of patients, (1.4 million in-pati-

ents and 15.6 million out-patients) in the entire history of the VA.

We cannot live with these cutbacks! Veterans have the right to these benefits. We, just like other people in the US have the right to decent healthcare and education. The VA is just like any other government agency slowly turning the screws on most people. We have to see the VA like any other part of the system that people are up against. As easy as it is to come to hate these idiot bureaucrats at the VA, the problem is actually much bigger than that; as long as we live under a system where profits come first, the VA, which is only one part of that economic system, will never function to take care of vets' needs. We can't reform the VA anymore than we can reform the CIA. Our fight is against the government and the class that controls it.

But as we build a unified, national vets movement we can and will struggle and learn from our struggle as we force the rich and their bureaucrats to cough up what we need. In the process, we'll learn that we don't need these parasites running things for us.

Letter to The Veteran

VVAW:

I'm a Vietnam-era veteran attending college under the present GI educational program. I registered at one of the California State universities in October of 1975. Until this date, I haven't received a check from the VA.

I went to see the veteran counsellor and the vet rep on campus to inquire about my checks. I received such replies as:

"It was my fault I haven't received any money. I was accused of reporting an incorrect address." I proved to them that I did not report an incorrect address.

Two and a half months of inquiries and I still get the runaround at the VA office. If I don't receive any assistance in the near future, I will be forced to withdraw from my classes in the middle of the quarter. I no longer have enough funds in my savings to pay for my living and transportation expenses.

I think something should be done about the mass inefficiencies that exist in the VA at present.

Sincerely yours,

A California vet

MORE LETTERS TO THE VETERAN CAN BE FOUND ON PAGE 10.

LETTERS TO VVAW

THE VETERAN WELCOMES LETTERS, COMMENTS AND CRITICISMS. PLEASE WRITE TO US. ALSO, IF YOU HAVE ANY POETRY, DRAWINGS OR STORIES YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE PAPER, SEND THEM ALONG.

(The following letter was written by a crewman of the nuclear submarine Haddock. This crewmember along with others aboard the sub, fought against unsafe conditions and successfully stopped the sub from sailing until some necessary repairs were made in November, '75. After superficial repairs the sub went to sea tests in December, '75 but sprang a leak in the engineroom, endangering the entire crew. The Haddock, based at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, has yet to become seaworthy. The crewman who wrote this letter, as well as other sailors involved in the fight for better conditions has been transferred by the Navy. See story in Dec-Jan Veteran.)

I was a concerned member of the HADDOCK crew who helped organize other sailors to fight the unsafe conditions that exist on the sub. As a result of our efforts, the problems of the sub have been brought out in the open and have forced the brass to clamp down.

The command is not concerned with the safety deficiencies; they have in the past and will try in the future to send an unsafe sub to sea. They are more concerned with hassling enlisted men who are organizing and effectively fighting their system. The brass is scared. They have lost control of the situation and are being exposed as the irresponsible and incompetent officers they are. The command is using their system to attack us and to scare people into submission. They're trying to break our unity and silence us because, if they do, no one will be able to bring the problems out in the open. As long as the brass can keep their activities concealed, the problems on the boat will not be solved.

The command has tried to use me as an example to others, in an attempt to show what happens to enlisted men who organize and fight their unjust system. Their first attempt to scare us was trumped-up charges of dereliction of duty against me. They couldn't prove anything and they relied on military injustice to punish me. However, the command was forced to drop the charge when they realized their attack on me further united other crew members and that we would beat their own system, exposing it for what it really is.

The brass wasn't discouraged, as their system provides them with many ways of "fighting back." They regrouped and decided to try claims that I was mentally unstable. Once again they were beaten because they couldn't prove their claims when they were forced to.

Presently, they have changed their tactics and are trying to break up our unity by transferring us to other commands. Their reason for trying to remove my job code and thus transfer me is that I am unreliable and that I have affected the morale and discipline of the ship. In every attack, they have very cleverly left out the unsafe conditions of the HADDOCK and have tried to keep things quiet.

It isn't working. Concerned crew members are still fighting the command and have refused to back off, after seeing how the brass is trying to use me as a scapegoat. Every attack by them solidifies our unity and exposes another unjust part of their system. But most important of all is that, when I am gone, I know others will take my place and continue the fight.

Fellow Vets,

Having served two years in Nam, from 1969-1971, I really know what you say. The Vietnam veteran has been shafted. We need to unite with all vets and people. I have tried to get an education on the GI Bill, only to have my hopes snuffed out. It's hard enough on \$320.00 a month, but pay tuition, books and housing--forget it. Plus when you don't even get a check for 3-4 months! I'll be in Philly on July 4th. Please send any info you have. I have many Vietnam vets who are interested.

Hoa Binh!

A vet from New Hampshire

Dear People,

I was jailed in 1969 for non-violently blocking the doorway to the Oakland induction center with my body. At that time (I was only 18) I considered anyone who'd go to fight in Vietnam as something akin to the devil.

Since that time--not through any ideas I read, but through opening out and becoming a wholer and fuller person, I think, I've come to realize that the Vietnam vets are victims, as much so as the Vietnamese, the water buffalo, the land of Vietnam. Especially now. Everyone wants to just forget you, you know.

I really would like to support VVAW now that the war is over (I did while the war was "on" too, of course)...I've been working as a volunteer teacher in a Chicano community school in Northern New Mexico. So my check is small.

You know, when some of you threw your medals at the White House--I think maybe it is not exaggerating to say this was an important thing in our country's history...

From Los Alamos,
New Mexico

Dear Friends,

I'm sending you \$6.00 for a one-year subscription and also \$4.00 as a contribution for The Veteran paper. I was in World War II--Company A, 372nd Engineers, at the Battle of the Bulge, etc, from 1942 til 1945, only 62 years old.

I have a four-hour detail in our VA hospital and domiciliary here without incentive pay of a big 5¢ or 10¢ an hour. Ouch!...But tomorrow morning I'm going into Building #1 and raise *!(!#*, telling them I want a different detail for only two hours without pay--that's enough of their BS around here! On my four-hour detail, I'm an "Escort-Messenger Service"--pushing patients on carts and in wheelchairs up to the spinal ward and down to the basement.

On your last demonstration out here in front of the VA hospital, one of our so-called Keystone Kops said to me, "Hey! You! Keep moving away from this entrance!" I said to him, "Go to hell--I work here for my room and board to stay at the Domiciliary." Just then two plainclothes men said, "Do as he said."... Then I told them, "Come up to Spinal Ward and I will show you what happened to my cousin and his friends who are down in the basement, trying to learn how to walk with two artificial legs--hips down to toes. Bring that Keystone Kop with you and I will personally take you on a good tour of the hospital here so you big shots can see with your own eyes what these men went through so you guys can hold your so-called bigshot jobs. They have all the right in the USA to fight for their rights. Next time I hope you guys have to go... When you fellows come back, look me up and then you tell me how in the Hell you like it." Yes! It's true--let the bigshots fight their own war. Then they won't be so cocky...

Sure looking for my next VVAW paper... Thanking you for listening to me sound off.

Your Friend,



VET FIGHTS PRISON, VA

In June, 1971, in a street in Monterey, California, a man was arrested, accused of first-degree murder for beating another man to death with a small log. He couldn't make bail, couldn't afford a lawyer, didn't remember what had happened, so couldn't testify in his own defense. The public defender did nothing about the man's requests for help, but persuaded him to plead guilty to second-degree murder. He was sentenced to a term of five years to life in prison.

In 1972 the man was finally referred to a clinical psychologist after he had recurring combat nightmares and ripped his cell apart during the nightmares. Under sodium pentothal the man remembered that the murder victim was armed with a gun and had pulled the gun on him, causing him to go into a blind rage. It was then that he killed the man. As the psychologist reported, "he had been trained as a killer and sent to Viet Nam where he got on the heavy drug scene and was never properly treated when he was returned to this country.... I feel his crime of murder is directly related to the fact that he was a trained killer and also a heavy drug user...."

This is no TV script; it happened and is still happening to Bill MacFarland. The day Bill turned 17 one of his friends was killed in Vietnam; because, he says, "I was brought up to fight for the country," he joined up the next day. In Vietnam he worked with grunt units and scout dogs, saw heavy combat and was sent home after severe wounds in both legs, his head and one arm. He left the service with an honorable discharge, medals, and a morphine habit.

And looked for a job: again, in his words--"I went to this company that needed men to work. The first thing the dude asked me was I a Vietnam Vet. I said yes. Then he said we don't want

dope fiends and baby burners working here. I spit in his face and broke one of his arms. They gave me county jail time. Man, I could not get a drink in Florida because I was only 19 years old. But I was good enough to fight in their rich man's war for them."

In and out of jails; in and out of VA hospitals. Mac had a blackout in the VA hospital in Tuscaloosa Alabama five days before killing a man in Monterey; he vaguely remembers trying to get admitted to a VA hospital in Los Angeles but left because of all the red tape. Since his conviction, he's been in front of the parole board three times, always turned down. Doctors say he should be getting treatment, not jail--in fact being around armed guards all the time only makes his condition worse. The VA refuses to deal with him because he's in prison. Here is a blatant case of the rich and their government using a man once and then throwing him away--more than that, locking him away and discarding the key.

Mac is one of thousands of Vietnam vets now in the prison system of the US, veterans almost wholly neglected by the VA at a time when many of them could most use VA assistance. But Mac is also an emphatic example of what has come to be called PVS--Post Vietnam Struggle. Simply, it is the after-effects of having fought a rich man's war of aggression in Southeast Asia, and turning the frustrations and anger of that situation inward. Very few Vietnam vets are affected by PVS, as Mac was; but very few Vietnam vets are wholly unaffected by the Vietnam experience, either.

Most people willingly fight for a cause in which they believe--the National Liberation Front in Vietnam never had the kind of morale problems which affected the Saigon military, for instance, because their soldiers were fighting for the freedom and independence of their country.

For many US soldiers, however, the sense of being used in a war that was not in our interests or in the interests of the people of Vietnam (as we were often told) has led to an overwhelming sense of anger and frustration. And we are constantly reminded of the way in which we were used and then thrown away by unemployment lines, an inadequate GI Bill, and a VA system which cannot meet our needs.

The government and the rich who run it try to minimize the anger that many vets feel; for years they fought against recognizing PVS as a service-connected disability just as they tried to prevent VA treatment for drug addiction by saying it had nothing to do with Vietnam service. Now they tell us, through their media, that Vietnam vets have "melted back into society...." At the same time, the ruling class tries to ignore or sweep under a rug those cases like Mac where they cannot claim that the Vietnam experience meant nothing; or, they paint individual Vietnam vets as bug-eyed crazies whose ideas are the result of too many drugs.

There are reasons why the rich can't afford to have the people of this country listen to vets and why they hope that vets will slide quietly back into US society. Vets have a message, based on our experiences: vets know that we fought a rich man's war, that we were not defending "democracy," that we were propping up a two-bit dictator in South Vietnam, and that we were protecting not the Vietnamese people but the profits of the US ruling class. Because that class still needs to have its profits protected and is moving inevitably toward another war, it can't afford to have vets say "We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War," and bring out what we learned in Vietnam.

Bill MacFarland is still fighting, now against the prison system and the VA; he is trying to get his case re-opened and to bring out the whole issue of PVS. Vets across the country, including those millions of Vietnam vets who now hold down jobs and have "melted into society" haven't forgotten the anger or the frustration of being used, either. But many of us have learned where that anger should be directed: straight at the class that sent us to Vietnam. When that class and their toadie politicians spout off about the glories of American wars during the Bicentennial, vets will be there to expose their lies. Their attempts to ease the American people into accepting another rich man's war will be met with a loud and clear NO! We fought for you once; now our fight's against you.

(For people who want to write to encourage Bill MacFarland, his address is:

W. A. MacFarland
P. O. Box B-38927
CTF-Central
Soledad, CA 93960

CONT'D FROM PAGE 1

and the rising cost of living. Today we supposedly get more money than World War II vets on the GI Bill, but it doesn't amount to anything towards a decent education.

The GI Bill didn't just fall out of the sky one day. It came into existence following WWII as a result of growing dissatisfaction among vets and GIs. While it was the first of its kind, veterans of every war from the Revolutionary War on, had voiced their anger for fighting a war and then being turned loose with little or no compensation and no jobs. One example of this struggle was in 1932 when 25,000 World War I vets participated in an action called the Bonus March demanding a cash bonus promised them by the government for their military service. They were ruthlessly attacked and several were killed by police and military forces in Washington, D. C.

When the GI Bill was created in 1944, it wasn't just some kind of hand-out given veterans out of the goodness of some rich peoples' hearts. Knowing how veterans had always fought for what we need, the rich looked overseas at the 11 million soldiers eating dirt and spilling blood on the battlefields of Europe and the Pacific islands. The people in power knew damn well that something had better be done for these soldiers when they returned home or there would be hell to pay. Around the world, WW II GIs were beginning to organize. Organizations like the "Back Home Movement" in the Phillipines and others like it in Europe were demanding to be sent home and that their needs be provided for.

The American capitalists could afford the GI Bill, at this point, because when the war ended, they were on top of the world. Europe was devastated. The poorer nations were relatively helpless.

National Campaign Started



With no major industrial power in the world to oppose them, the rulers of the US were free to exploit and rip off profits from people all over the world. Thus they were able to accommodate vets with a barely adequate GI Bill and still keep their big profits rolling in. They could easily afford to train vets for jobs in industry because then industry was expanding and the US economy's future looked rosy. But it didn't stay that way very long.

Then, as today, the economy began to sag. Gone was the intense need for better-trained and educated employees. The factory owners had enough. At the same time, Congress began to "restructure" the GI Bill and begin the cutbacks

that we face today.

The Korean Conflict Legislation of 1952 and the Cold War Bill of 1966 were both hailed as vast improvements on the WWII Bill because they provided extended periods of eligibility for receiving and using the benefits. On the surface these bills looked good, but what was going down were some drastic changes in the distribution of benefits. A more selective process of qualifications and payment for the Bill, time limitations on its use, continual reexamination and cutbacks in disability payments, the inability of payments to match the cost of living; in short, more red tape and VA hassles which grew and grew until reaching the present point.

Under that first GI Bill, vets automatically had the cost of their education, (tuition, books and fees) paid for them and received an additional living allowance. Vietnam-era vets receive a straight monthly allowance for education that is supposed to pay for educational expenses plus living expenses. WW II vets received up to \$500 per year, paid directly to the schools, plus \$75 monthly for their living expenses. At the 1946 purchasing value \$75 was nearly equal to the cash which vets get today when we receive \$270 per month (for a single vet) to pay for everything. The amount that vets get today doesn't meet the cost of living expenses, much less anything left over to go to school with and pay the inflated fees there. While it appears to be more money today, it actually falls way short of the WW II Bill.

The cost of education today, nearly triple what it was in 1946, and the cost of living, which rose 20% in the last two years alone have made the GI Bill today a mere shadow of the WW II benefits.

(Continued on page 13)

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CITRUS STATE VETS FORCE VA TO PAY

In its stepped-up effort to pinch pennies, the VA cut off GI Bill payments to 2400 vets at Citrus State College in Azusa, California. The "official" reason was that the VA wanted to audit the records of the vets to investigate possible "cheating" of the VA.

The vets' response was immediate. Three hundred vets held a meeting. Leaflets were passed out, rallies were held and some of the vets went to the VA to confront the director. They bypassed his flunkies and sat on his desk until he answered some questions. As a result of these actions, the VA released checks for about half of the vets.

The next step in the fight was in the courtroom where the judge issued a temporary restraining order requiring the VA to resume payments to all the vets. This means that the vets will be receiving an average of \$300 in payments. A suit is being brought against the VA to prevent cutoffs of payments without individual hearings, and at this point what will happen to the payments in the future is uncertain.

It might be that we'll get some satisfaction from what comes out of court, but we can't count on it. Dealing with the courts and the law is tricky, and most often the trick is played on us. The courts, like the VA, are part of the rich man's system that put us in a bind in the first place. When workers go on strike for better wages and working conditions the courts are right there to hand out an injunction limiting the strike, limiting our power to fight back. An individual fighting a company or the government in court has about as much chance as he would rowing a boat from here to Vietnam. It's possible to make it, but his life will be half over by the time he gets there. We'll take victories like the temporary restraining order in this case,

but we can't rely on the court system or the federal government. They serve the ruling class, not us.

So who do we rely on? Ourselves, that's who! What happened at Citrus State is a prime example. When the vets got together the VA started to let loose with the checks. What happened at Citrus State is only an indication of what's to come. The VA can save millions of dollars by forcing many of us out of school and by sending our checks late, and that's what they plan to do. They've started this propaganda campaign about vets cheating the VA by missing classes, signing up for the wrong courses, and on and on. Who are they kidding? In the first place, is the GI Bill for us to get an education or to make another reveille formation? In the second place, just who the hell is cheating who? Some con artist in the VA hierarchy must have thought that one up while he was watching "Switch" on TV some Tuesday night (or maybe "The Sting").

At Citrus State the VA is just testing the waters, trying to see how we'll react, or trying to see how far they can go. Citrus State--or something like it--will happen again. The Los Angeles Chapter of VVAW is supporting the struggle of the Citrus State vets and taking out the word about their fight to other campuses in the area. VVAW chapters are ready to carry on this struggle around the country. The vet and his benefits are under attack and we're going to fight back, like other working people are fighting government cutbacks in the things we need. It's vital that our fight be organized because alone we get lost in the shuffle. It's also vital that we organize now. There's an economic crisis and we know that the government is cutting back; the cuts they make aren't going to be made in oil depletion allowances or subsidies to failing banks. Let's learn from Citrus State.

defraud the government." Later in the same statement, Provost pushed the idea that more and more vets are cheating the government, leading people to assume that most vets are guilty until proven innocent. The ideas and attitudes being sold here and in similar articles around the US completely overlook the real problem. Unemployment among vets is incredibly high; many vets have had to take jobs that pay less than established poverty levels. The question isn't whether or not vets are attending all their classes but how they are going to stay alive, if they can find work. We need those checks. We need them to raise our education levels for better jobs and we need them to feed ourselves and our families when we attend school to get the GI Bill for lack of jobs. The GI Bill isn't an offer that can be withdrawn based on bureaucratic necessity or VA regulations. They owe it to us for all the crap they put us through, and we mean to have it!

While they make us out to be some kind of greedy criminals, we remember who pocketed the bucks when they sent us off to be killed, wounded, or to kill some other people in their interests. These same people, who Mr Provost and others like him speak for, will promise anything when they want fresh meat for the battlefield, but when it comes time to pay up, they start with GI Bill fraud stories. The result is, we have to fight like hell for what was rightfully ours to begin with.

Vets everywhere are saying enough! Unemployment among Vietnam-era vets is higher than the national average. Many of us have turned to school to stay alive. Others are going to school to improve what job skills they have or to gain more education in hopes of a better job. Now, with the GI Bill under heavy attack, we've had a bellyful of this crap. For the last two years VVAW has been fighting these cutbacks on a daily basis in many cities, but this isn't enough. Today, VVAW is turning its attention nationally to this attack on the GI Bill. By petitioning and uniting with vets around the country, we begin this campaign to extend and expand the GI Bill. Veterans everywhere, from all eras, have to build that unity which makes us a national fighting veterans movement. With that unity we will be able to stand up and meet all attacks on veterans, like the current attack on the GI Bill.

We have to fight for what we need and we're not going to let the rich take it back from us--little by little, or all at once!



EXTEND & EXPAND the GI BILL,cont'd

Since that first GI Bill, every year has brought an annual review of the evaluation procedures that determine eligibility for all benefits, who gets them, and how much. Each year has also brought steady cutbacks in the number of these benefits given out and shrinking amounts for various sections of the GI Bill. In August 1975, Ford signed a bill hiking benefits 10-12% for disabilities, an action that was given headlines of a tremendous advance in vets benefits. This "tremendous advance" didn't even cover the cost of living for the previous year. Not satisfied to undermine the GI Bill, they are trying to push through Congress legislation to eliminate the GI Bill entirely for people currently

or soon to be in the military. At the same time, Ford, like the puppet he is, did away with many existing benefits by Presidential Proclamation.

Moving behind a smokescreen of "economic necessity" the Ford administration, with the help of the media, are portraying vets who obtain the GI Bill as chiselers who abuse the Bill and waste money that could be used elsewhere. Last summer, Dr Stanley Provost, an officer of the National Association of State Approving Agencies, whose members certify colleges for VA approval, stated that "It's difficult to prove in every case whether the student is willfully attempting to

VA Patients, Workers Demand

REHIRE TIM WELLS

At the Allen Park VA Hospital in Detroit, workers and patients have been fighting back in different ways against the rotten medical care and working conditions, and building their unity against the administration. Tim Wells, a nursing assistant at the hospital has been a part of this struggle and as a result he has been fired. Because he's a fighter, the VA bigshots are out to get him, but VVAW and his fellow workers say, "Hell no! Tim Wells has got to stay on his job!"

To show how the VA works, they gave Tim his first warning in the form of counselling only five days after he witnessed a nurse hit a patient. When the patient protested and asked Tim to be a witness, he agreed. The nursing supervisor found this out, called Wells into the office and strongly suggested that he not be a witness. But this bogus attempt to get Wells to back off didn't work, and in the end it was the administration which had to back off and transfer the nurse off the ward.

The letter of termination came shortly after Wells and other workers protested the way administrators promoted workers. Despite the "proper procedures," promotions often go to those with "connections," and Wells and other workers were saying that they wouldn't be treated like a bunch of fools.



VA workers and patients fight together for decent healthcare and working conditions in Detroit.

The VA claimed that Wells was fired because of absenteeism and lateness (3 latenesses in one year!), but the real reason is that the VA bigshots are definitely scared of workers and patients organizing and fighting for what they need. This firing is just one more incident to arouse their anger. We're all tired of their harassment and intimidation, calling vets "junkies" or "drunks" or sending patients to the psycho ward when they dare to protest their treatment. We're all tired of worsening health care and working conditions, of minimizing costs and cutting staffs. There are no profits in sick veterans. The only thing the VA bigshots care about is how small a budget they can show their bosses in Washington. So we have to fight for everything we get from them.

VVAW in Detroit has been uniting with hospital workers, patients and other vets to fight for decent medical care. The VA's attempts at stopping this fight by firing people like Tim Wells will only backfire on them, because we see that an attack on him is an attack on all of us. Veterans and hospital workers are stepping up the struggle for decent medical care and decent working conditions. As part of that fight, we demand that Tim Wells stay on his job.

CETA VETS, cont'd

through the struggle of thousands of people across the US, fighting for jobs. That's what caused the federal government to cough up the money in the first place. As the New York City VVAW chapter said, "The CETA cuts are one more way the rich try to put the burden of their crisis on our backs. Well, we have news for Beain, the Banks, the Federal government and all the other fat cats who want to screw us over--we say NO CUTS--NO WAY. We've got to FIGHT for EVERY JOB."

The refusal of vets at CCNY to quietly watch their jobs being stolen by the bosses sparked similar resistance in New Jersey. There, the Northern New Jersey chapter of VVAW went to work in support of CETA city workers, many of them vets, facing similar cutbacks, layoffs, and an eventual phasing out of the program (by June, 1976--just in time for the Bicentennial celebration). While the bosses say cutback, vets and other CETA workers are fighting back--with the same fight that won the CETA program in the first place.



PROGRAM OF VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

25¢

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We don't put our faith in the government or the bloated business tycoons who pull its strings. They're the ones who wanted us real bad when they needed blood to shed for their profits, and who throw us away when we don't swell their profits further. Instead, we put our faith in the millions of veterans who have shared with us the experience of being used and thrown away. We learn from the vets who have gone before us in fighting for their needs and their rights. We learn from working people's determination to fight. When one vet fights alone, he can get lost. When a hundred, a thousand vets fight together we're able to fight long and hard to win our demands.

This program is a battle plan for veterans. It's how we're going to fight, why we're fighting, and who we're fighting against. All vets have a stake in this struggle because all of us were used and then tossed aside. We're going to fight back, whether at the VA, on the campus, the unemployment office or on the job--everyplace we're being shafted. We want every veteran, from whatever war, and others who want to fight for the rights of veterans, to join in this fight.

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IT'S RIGHT TO RESIST UNJUST WARS!

VETS DEMAND AMNESTY

National Amnesty Week was held recently in states across the country. It was called and sponsored by many amnesty organizations and religious groups. Various activities occurred from community meetings to Congressional lobbying. The idea of this amnesty week was to attempt to focus attention on the fact that a total and universal amnesty has not been given for the approximately 2 million people who protested against the Indochina war in one way or another.

The amnesty week came approximately a month after the Presidential Clemency Board released its report on the program initiated by President Ford in September, 1974. This clemency program was put forward by the Ford administration in response to his pardon of Richard Nixon, the ousted bum who preceded him.

The Ford program was a sham from the beginning to the end. Its provisions for who was to receive clemency excluded most of those who needed a full amnesty. The single largest group in need of amnesty are the approximately 580,000 Vietnam era vets who received less than honorable discharges for their opposition to the war in Indochina and to the military itself. The program also excluded those who were arrested for anti-war activities, numbering in the thousands.

For veterans, the bad discharges mean more than just a slap on the wrist from the military. If you've got one it means that you are marked for the rest of your life. Employers don't want a vet with a bad discharge; the VA doesn't care if you live or die and the GI Bill is out of reach. For the small handful of veterans who were included in the Clemency program they could exchange their undesirable discharge for a clemency discharge, which is comparable to moving from Sodom to Gomorrah.

The vast majority of those included in the clemency program avoided it like the Black Plague. The board stated in its report that about 82% of eligible enrollees didn't even bother to enter it. The program was a flop in every way. But it is clear that the program was never designed to give amnesty or even clemency with strings attached.

During the late 60s and early 70s, millions of Americans protested the war in Indochina. GIs refused to go out on patrols in Vietnam and veterans of the war joined with others to denounce it. Though protest to the war varied, sometimes muddled in moralism, and sometimes in acts of individual sabotage, the sense that US participation in the war in Vietnam was unjust became more and more clear to the vast majority of Americans. Opposing the

war was absolutely correct, because it didn't serve our interests and it certainly didn't serve the interests of the Indochinese peoples. It was a war waged by the rulers of this country and the puppet governments in Indochina to try and stop the struggle for freedom and independence being waged by the Indochinese people. But the intervention didn't work--the Vietnamese, Cambodian and Laotian people won their struggle and are now on the road to rebuilding their nations free of US domination.

But for Americans who opposed the war, we haven't won our battle yet. While we rejoice in the victory of the Indochinese peoples we are saddled with bad discharges and criminal records. The fight for total, unconditional amnesty continues and this fight is closely linked to the fight for a single-type discharge for all veterans and the opposition to rich man's war that serves the interests of the ruling class.

A SINGLE-TYPE DISCHARGE FOR ALL VETERANS!



CORPS CRUMBLES WHO CARES?

There is considerable discussion whether the Marine Corps, currently celebrating its 200th anniversary, should celebrate anymore of them.

As the power of the US dwindles around the world, the US military is shifting from its seafaring capability and visions of "grunts" storming ashore to preserve and protect American business interests. Instead, we see more sophisticated weapons and airlift tactics. The Marine Corps is quickly becoming a thing of the past.

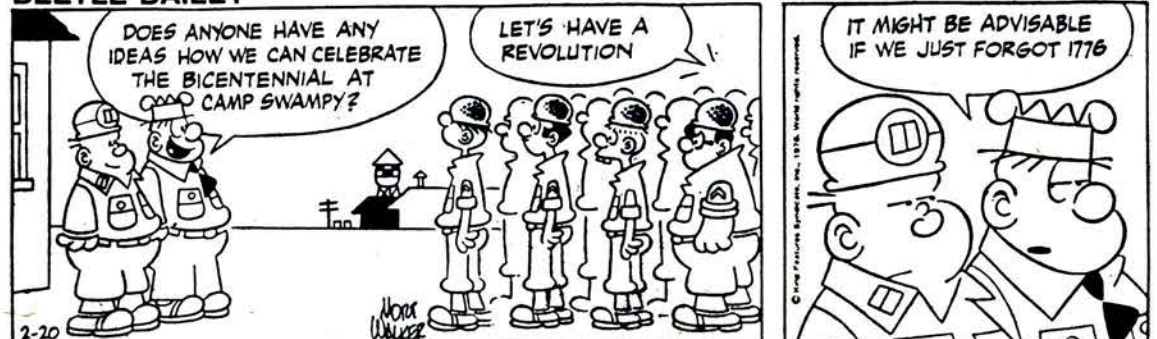
The Senate Armed Forces Committee is currently studying the role of the Marines in today's world. Having been kicked out of Southeast Asia and unwelcome around the world, the US military and the Marines in particular are quickly running out of Third World countries to assault. The US military is gearing more toward the inevitable war in Europe or the Middle East and has little need for an obsolete light infantry force. This is especially true in the face of highly developed technical weapon systems that make such geographical strategy that used Marines nearly impossible.

Meanwhile, striving to maintain its image of rugged, bonehead, 19th century "let us turn your brains to cheese" recruiting and training methods, the Marine Corps is having internal problems. Unable to compete with the phoney jobs pitch of the other military branches, the Corps is still looking for a few good men.

Defense Department studies recently gave the Marines the highest rating of all the branches of the military--highest in AWOLS, desertions, and drug abuse all due in part to miserable living and working conditions and the concept of "democratic rights and military justice" administered to enlisted people with a concentration-camp mentality.

Whether the government vetoes the Marine Corps or it deteriorates on its own isn't the important question. Let the ruling class juggle their forces as they please and scrap what they want. Our demand is an end to the use of the US military around the world in wars of aggression and as a police force against workers here at home.

BEETLE BAILEY



SHAYS' REBELLION

1786--VETS FIGHT BACK

In 1783, after months of trying to find work, Revolutionary War veteran Elijah Fisher wrote in his diary: "There was so many that come from the army and from the sea (the Navy) that had no homes, that would work for little or nothing but their vittels, that I could not find any Employment. . . . I begun to think over how I had been in the army, what ill success I had met with there, and also how I was wronged by them I worked for at home." Like today, unemployment and other kinds of financial grief followed discharge from the military after the American Revolution; like today, vets fought back.

The Treaty of Paris officially ended the war in 1783, though the fighting was actually over in 1781. Many veterans faced both short and long range money problems. The Continental Army paid wages seldom; when they did, wages were paid in paper money which was practically worthless. Many discharged vets had to beg along the route home just to survive. In Pennsylvania, a group of 240 outraged veterans demonstrated outside the Executive Council of the state demanding cash; although their target was the state government, the Continental Congress was also meeting in the building, and quickly decided to adjourn. One eyewitness reported, "I myself saw a soldier. . . charge on one of the members of Congress with his bayonet, while the gentleman was on his escape, after promising to do everything in his power to have our arrears of pay and clothing paid off." This group of privates and non-commissioned officers was broken up by the Continental army, but not until they got their pay and clothing which they were demanding.

The long-range money problems facing returning vets were even greater, however. A large number of the 210,000 men who served during the war were farmers, often owning or paying on their own small plot of land. While speculators, some merchants, and some leaders of the Revolution were getting rich during the war, the small farmers often had to borrow money or at least not pay the mortgages on their lands. The problems were compounded by there being no uniform "money" (under the Articles of Confederation, printing of money was left to the states). In the general prosperity that immediately followed the war, these vets could get by, but by 1785, notes were falling due, people were being hauled off to debtors' prisons, farms were being foreclosed. In one Massachusetts town, one of every four citizens had anywhere from 1 to 12 suits filed against him.



People's anger focused on courts and tax collectors; here, tax collector is being strung up to be tarred and feathered by the Sons of Liberty.

The court system which served as the instrument for the rich creditors to collect their debts became the focus of anger and resistance; many people saw this battle as a continuation of the Revolution, now against tax-collectors and the courts instead of the British. As one veteran pointed out in a letter to the local newspaper, "I early stepped forth in the defense of this country and cheerfully fought to gain the prize; and liberty is still the object I have in view. . . to prevent such abuses as have of late taken place by the sitting of these courts. . . valuable and industrious members of society dragged from their families to prison. I am determined to stand with firmness and resolution."

And stand they did. A fife and drum parade of 1500 armed men, most of them vets, kept the courts from opening in Northampton, Mass. In Groton, vets built barricades out of fence-posts until the judges snuck away from the court. When the Massachusetts state Supreme Court attempted to indict leaders of the rebellion, 700 men marched to the courthouse; there were no indictments.

Out of this turmoil came Daniel Shays. He had joined the army after Lexington, had served bravely at Bunker Hill, and been promoted to captain; he was noted for the unusual consideration with which he treated those below him in rank. Mustered out in 1780, he settled on a small farm in Pelham, Mass, where his neighbors elected him to serve as a community

officer. Shays' trophy for his service was a ceremonial sword, presented to him by Lafayette; after Shays' Rebellion, he was attacked in the press for selling the sword. In fact, he had come from grinding poverty, was poor all his life, and needed the money.

Shays' fellow townspeople prevailed on him to take charge of a group of men in the area in 1786 as the resistance to the courts was spreading. Drilling his men with hickory sticks instead of guns, and with sprigs of hemlock in their hats as insignia, Shays and his men closed down courts in western Mass. for three months. Still, the wheels of the rich man's courts ground on. In January, 1787, Shays led 1100 men toward the federal arsenal at Springfield.

Under the pressure of Shays' army, the Mass legislature called out the militia--but only a special contribution from a number of wealthy Bostonians (who felt their property was being threatened) provided the \$20,000 needed to pay the troops. The first confrontation found the militia (mostly veterans) facing Shays volunteer army, also mostly war vets. When ordered to fire, the militia fired into the ground. But in later skirmishes, several of Shays' men were killed and his army scattered; they were no match for the well-armed, trained, and disciplined militia. Shays and other leaders were sentenced to death, but escaped. Shays was pardoned several years later, and eventually moved to the frontier in western New York state.

The immediate effects of Shays' Rebellion were notable--debts were now payable in paper money; there were public sales of land which meant no more tax increases; debtors' prisons were abolished (though a couple of years later). Large numbers of people agreed with what the vets were doing. One historian, writing a year after the Rebellion, noted that the farmers did not think it fair that they had shed blood in the field only to be worn out by taxes at home, or fought for the rights of their creditors to drag them off to prison.

It was the people of the country who had fought and won the Revolution against British rule; now it was the same people who were fighting to keep the new ruling class from taking away from them all the gains they had fought for. Vets who had given their blood and several years of their lives in the fight were paying the penalty for that time--and then like now, they resisted the attacks on them.