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# NATIONAL OFFICE REPORT

## 13th VVAW-WSO NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING August 8-12



### BUFFALO, NY

## EXTERNAL REPORT

The past four months have seen a steady deepening and broadening of our ties with other progressive forces, both here in the U. S. and elsewhere around the world. As VVAW/WSO matures, it becomes increasingly necessary for us to maintain these ties and to understand their great significance to us. We must constantly guard against neglecting external relationships, dismissing them as unimportant or unrelated to our work. The July demonstration in Washington clearly proved just how important they actually can be. Without the substantial support we received from many other organizations in building for the July demo, we could not have made it nearly so great a success as it was.

As we pointed out in the external National Office report to the Milwaukee NSCM, such united actions have neither caused us to lose our independence as an organization or forced us to water down our anti-imperialist politics to meaningless reformism. Rather, VVAW/WSO has come out of the experience as a much stronger and more capable organization. Principled, united action will both build VVAW/WSO and the general anti-imperialist movement.

Overseas, VVAW/WSO has reaffirmed existing relations with a number of groups and has established new relations with others. We continue to maintain regular communications with our Indochinese comrades in North and South Vietnam and in Cambodia. Elsewhere, VVAW/WSO GI chapters in Japan have continued their very close working relationship with Japanese peace groups such as Beherein. We have been in recent communication with representatives of numerous Italian progressive groups, have established relations with the Dutch GI movement in Holland and have strengthened our ties with representatives of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

VVAW/WSO members participated in the highly successful Montreal Conference on Vietnam in early June. This conference was organized and sponsored by the Association of Vietnamese Patriots in Canada and was attended by a wide variety of Canadian and U. S. organizations. More recently, our Yokosuka chapter represented VVAW/WSO at the 20th World Conference Against A & H Bombs in Tokyo. Organized by the Japanese peace group, Gensuikyo, this conference marks the sixth time that VVAW/WSO members have participated in anti-nuclear war activities organized by Gensuikyo.

Domestically, VVAW/WSO continues to work closely with a wide spectrum of progressive forces in the U. S. movement. There are few regions that do not work with at least a few groups in their area on a regular basis. In addition to these ties, the National Office mails out copies of Winter Soldier and other VVAW/WSO organizational materials on a monthly basis to the majority of movement groups in the U. S. Whether they like us or not, most groups have definitely heard from us. Finally, we are happy to report that our ties have strengthened with many GI projects. Communications have increased and visits to many projects on both the east and west coast took place in recent months.

There are exceptions to this general picture, of course. Overall, our rela-

tionship with the Communist Party, USA has not been what it should. Given the complexity of the subject, it will be gone into in some detail further on in this report. Clearly, the most serious problems we've had with other organizations in recent months have been with the so-called American Veterans Movement. The National Office external report to the Milwaukee NSCM first raised the issue of AVM's reactionary role in the veterans' movement. At that time, AVM was successfully masquerading as a "progressive" veterans organization, gaining an incredible hype from the straight media and even a helping hand from a lot of movement organizations that were not aware of AVM's real role. Just about every word written in that report about AVM's reactionary leadership was borne out in practice during our July demonstration in Washington. There, AVM unsuccessfully tried to pimp off of the rising veterans' movement and, more directly, off of the demonstration VVAW/WSO was organizing. While they naturally continued to get the full support of the establishment press, AVM was totally revealed to the people for just what they are: cold-blooded opportunists. Most of our position on AVM and groups like them can be found in the editorial we wrote on the veterans' movement in the August Winter Soldier. While AVM was utterly exposed in D.C. as out and out opportunists with no base and no program, that is not to say that other groups will not quickly rise to fill their shoes. This has been the history of the veterans' movement since its inception. VVAW/WSO must constantly guard against this reactionary tendency in the veterans' movement wherever it is being pushed from -- either by the AVM, the American Legion, the VFW or whomever.

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## INTERNAL REPORT

Most of the activity around the country during the past 4 months centered around the DC demonstration. The strength and effectiveness of many regions was reflected by the numbers of participants in the demo. Some regions such as Colorado and California had problems which come from geography and lack of transportation; at the same time, the fact that only a handful of people came from places such as Alabama or the Carolinas accurately reflected the amount of organizational work which was done in those places.

Because of the demo, communications to and from the NO have been less frequent than usual, and the majority of them dealt with aspects of the demonstration. (Pre-demo work in the regions will be covered in the demo section of this report.) We cannot, therefore, give more than an overview of the growth of particular regions. Two regions, New England and Eastern Pa, both of which were functioning on a low level of activity at the time of the last NSCM have revived through work on the demo and after. The Washington-Alaska region has also begun to revive, and a few interested people are at work in Oregon and in Idaho-Montana. Otherwise, strong regions continue to grow; some of the weaker regions have gotten weaker or gone under completely.

We have good communications, in general, concerning what individual chapters and regions are doing; what we do not get is a political analysis of what is going on. We feel there is a need for the organization to pass around the knowledge which comes out of our practice. The internal newsletter is one good way to do this. We need something more than the fact that a chapter has appeared on a couple of TV shows, or picketed the VA (though we need this information also). What was the effect of the action? How was it effective (or ineffective), and how could it have been improved? How did it build the chapter or the anti-imperialist movement? An unusual activity--like the New York City shit list--should be advertised to other chapters, but we can only do so if we know about it.

We are asking chapters and regions to analyze their own actions or activities, to make decisions about particular campaigns or programs--and then to feed that information to the NO so that we can print it for the benefit of other chapters. This is one of the functions which we believe the internal newsletter should fulfill.

We also feel that the organization has grown--both physically and politically--to the extent that we now can and must make a realistic assessment of our strengths and weaknesses as an organization--where we have active chapters or contacts, and where we do not. Our chapter listings are full of chapters which are nothing more than a mailbox number, and do as much work as a number can be expected to do. Partly, we believe, this comes from the tendency to hype our own region, to see the regions as competitive, and to base this competition on the number of chapters we list on paper. This tendency clearly omits the fact that we are a national, not regional organization. What we feel is needed is a full-scale housecleaning so that we, as an organization, know where we are: that will give us a clear point from which to continue to build. We therefore ask regional offices to contact the chapters in the region and get the information as to whom is real and who is phantom to the NO.

The problems caused by phantom chapters lead to a larger question, one which we believe should be considered at a workshop during this meeting. We propose that



there be a workshop on internal organizing which should begin to discuss questions like what is a chapter, what is a member, and what degree of organizational discipline should we exercise.

Because the situation in Florida is the most glaring example of the problems which can appear under our present loose organizational guidelines, we use that as an example. According to our chapter list, we have eight chapters in Florida. Of these, six do not exist at all--we have written to them from the NO, and the regional office has tried to contact them. There has been no reply. Then there is a group of people in Tampa, and finally, the South Florida chapter (Miami and Ft Lauderdale).

First, the story of Tampa (abridged): Tampa has, for the past eight months, refused to work within the Florida region. Its coordinator, Carl Brown, has not been honest with the NO and, worse, with the people in the chapter. Information from other people in Tampa makes it obvious that information from the NO does not get to the membership, and what does get through is badly distorted. In preparation for the DC demonstration, Carl Brown became a coordinator for AVM, organizing for their demonstration; while in Washington he stayed at the AVM office. When he did appear at the Mall, he was confronted by people from the Florida region and specifically people from Tampa and was thrown out of the campsite.

Several people from Tampa have talked to the NO about trying to build a chapter in Tampa, one which would be a VVAW/WSO chapter (not VVAW as Carl Brown puts forth), and would follow the programs laid out by the NSC. As yet, nothing has come of these attempts. We believe that there may be a Tampa chapter of AVM; there is no VVAW/WSO chapter.

Finally, the situation in Miami. While this report was being written there was a phone call from Miami which contradicted what was already a confusing situation report--in other words, the primary aspect of the Miami/South Florida chapter at this time is confusion, with different factions giving entirely different versions of what is going on. To give one example: The Miami Herald quotes Scott Browne, who is identified as the Miami coordinator, as saying "We are constitutionalists. Frankly, I don't know if we're a right-wing organization or a left-wing organization these days." Scott Browne says that he was misquoted; another faction from Miami says that the quote is substantially correct.

Summing up, there is no VVAW/WSO organization in Florida. We are only kidding ourselves to say that one exists. There are honest people in Florida who are interested in building VVAW/WSO; we cannot and should not forget them. This is true in Tampa and around the region, though with the present reputation of VVAW/WSO in the state, recruiting honest leadership who will work to build the organization in Florida.

Florida is just a blatant example of the results of our present structure. The NSC must have and use the power to create and dissolve regions. We believe that the NSC should begin to look toward the day when NSC representatives go into a region to help that region build, or at least spend sufficient time in a region to watch the practice and make recommendations to the NSC before that region is accepted as part of the national organization. The time has passed when we, as an organization, can be so liberal as to let any person, no matter what his or her politics, background,

or qualifications, start a chapter and represent the organization. We should consider guidelines for membership, and guidelines for chapters. We are a political organization, and the exercise of internal organizational discipline is essential.

The NO does not have the solutions to these problems; we have no concrete proposals to bring to a workshop. We do think we have to start discussing these problems and finding solutions. This is why we propose a workshop on internal organization be added to the agenda, and that ideas from this workshop be taken back for discussion in chapters and regions.



## NATIONAL PRISON PROJECT REPORT

It was one year ago, at the St. Louis NSCM, that we began to discuss the possibility of doing some sort of prison work. In this past year, we feel that we have made a great deal of progress, obtained a clear political grasp of the work we are doing, and the Prison Project has grown very rapidly (though not out of hand). We are in regular communication with nearly 100 prisons around the country, and we have several major contacts in the majority of those prisons -- contacts who communicate with us regularly and provide in-put as to how they envision our Prison Project operating. These are very solid contacts and the running of our project has begun to depend on the ideas of these brothers and sisters to a large extent.

At the last NSCM, we set down a statement of purpose for our prison work. We feel that this statement has been realized and should continue to be the guideline for our work. Our major focus of work has been on tying together the struggles going on in various prisons, while at the same time tying these struggles in with the over-all anti-imperialist movement. Prisoners have picked up on this idea in a very positive way, and have encouraged this focus of our prison work. We cannot, nor should we, be organizing the prison movement. Thus, we feel the focus of work we have arrived at is correct and has been proved out in our practice. It is true that in certain cases we have been able to provide help to people in prison (i. e. getting legal assistance, putting people in touch with people who are better able to help them, etc), but the majority of our work has been, and should continue to be, offering support for struggles, corresponding with people and providing political discussion on a variety of issues. We have learned the importance of being honest with these brothers and sisters, and have continued to express that prison organizing is not the major focus of our work. They have welcomed this honesty, with an understanding that our major work lies outside prison walls, though they also understand that our concern with lending support to their struggles is sincere.

An example of the way in which prisoners have related to our day-to-day work may be seen in the way they responded to our national demonstration in Washington. Prior to the demo, we sent out petitions (Declaration of Solidarity and Support) which put forward the five demands. These petitions were designed to be circulated so that knowledge of our demands could be spread, and so that our brothers and sisters in prisons could in some manner plug into the demonstration and express their support of our demands. The response to these petitions was very impressive -- we received over 750 signatures from prisons in all parts of the country. When the petitions were returned, letters of support for our demands and much interest around the demo was expressed from the "inside." We feel that this shows that these brothers and sisters do relate to the daily work of our organization and that they have an understanding of what our work is all about, as well as how our work relates to their particular oppression.

We hope to be able to tie in this understanding of VVAW/WSO in more concrete ways in the future. For example, we will be discussing the future of VVAW/WSO, and since the majority of our prison membership relates very strongly to being members, we are expecting many responses from people on questions such as these. We hope to be able to tie the prison membership more closely together by showing that we are concerned with people's opinions on the type of work that VVAW/WSO is in-



volved in. In line with this, some of the people that have been in contact with us over the past year are beginning to be released and paroled. They are interested in learning more about the organization and are investigating VVAW/WSO as a group they may wish to work with on a daily basis.

We believe that part of the reason for the increase of "organizational identity" within our prison membership is the prison newsletter, "Inside/Out." Only three newsletters have been sent out, but the response to this publication has been extremely positive. The newsletter has now established itself and enough response and "routine" have developed so that we expect this to be an on-going monthly publication of the Project Office. There has been some confusion as to who this newsletter should be sent to, and we criticize ourselves for not getting the newsletter out to all of those chapters which are doing prison work. Hopefully, problems such as this can be resolved in the prison workshop.

Problems with the National Prison Project stem around a lack of communication between the Project Office and the regional offices. Once again, we must raise the point that we simply do not have a good understanding of the types of prison work that chapters and regions are doing. We know that there is activity, but unless we are informed of it, it is difficult to analyze the success of the project on a regional/chapter level. For example, we know that chapters are interested in getting DUPs inside prisons so that the necessary personal contact can be made. However, we have very little idea as to how these plans are progressing, what problems have arisen, and where in fact, prison DUPs are operating. Because of this, we must again stress the importance of communications from the regional level to the project office, and at the same time, we realize that communications between the Project Office and the regions must also be increased and made more effective.

On the whole, our prison work is progressing very well. We should now begin to sum up where we have been with this project, and the direction that we should be moving toward for the future.

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### POLITICAL PRISONERS REPORT

Work around political repression and political trials has been on the rise during the past six months, and this work is being done on local, regional and national levels of the organization. Also, the trials being worked on include those which are of both national and local importance and scope. The form for our defense work includes both VVAW/WSO committees, as well as coalitional efforts to defend political prisoners. We see the increasing support we have been able to provide for political trials as a positive thing, and work which VVAW/WSO should continue to be involved in. As repression heightens in the U. S., more political trials will be arising and many of these will demand our response and/or involvement in some form or another.

Many of the trials that we are currently working on will be discussed separately at this meeting, thus the details as to what is happening with these trials will not



be discussed here. It is important, however, to give an over-view of the types of trials that we are working on around the country. On a national level, work around the trial of Gary Lawton and Zurebu Gardner is continuing, and the interest which was generated last December around this trial has remained and the organization as a whole is relating in a much more concrete manner to this national project. Gary has continued to do speaking gigs around the country whenever he was able to get away from trial preparations in Riverside, and Gary's speaking gigs have done much to inspire regions to raise the racism and repression of this trial in more day-to-day ways than was ever done before. Hopefully, this kind of work and a continual raising of the issues involved in this frame-up will continue through the approaching third trial.

Other trials which the organization is heavily involved in include the Leavenworth Brothers -- a series of trials being worked on by chapters in Kansas and Missouri. These trials involve VVAW/WSO members, both as defendants and as defense personnel; and for this reason, plus the fact that these trials are very important for the prison movement, have made chapters around the country take an interest in and closely follow the events of these trials. Also, work around Bob Hood continues at a high level, particularly in the Bay Area of California, and though Bob's trial is basically a local issue it is important to realize that the national organization is involved because the arrest and charging of Hood is just one more in a series of attacks on VVAW/WSO.

In other parts of California, the San Jose chapter has taken the lead in working for the freeing of Ruchell Magee and a growing, coalition effort for defense has been initiated in that area. Ruchell's trial is definitely of national importance and other chapters may wish to examine the way in which they can best plug into this effort to obtain Ruchell's freedom. Another local defense committee has been formed by the Santa Barbara chapter which is defending a federal prison, Al Glatkowski, imprisoned because of the highjacking of the Columbia Eagle in Cambodia. Al is organizing the VVAW/WSO chapter in Lompoc Prison and his case may turn out to be very important -- both for the prison movement and the amnesty movement. We hope to get more information on this case out in the near future.

Other trials that the organization is working on in a support capacity include the Attica Brothers and the Houston 12, while work around Karl Armstrong is still being done in Wisconsin. The National Office has continued to keep informed of many other major trials going on around the country -- Wounded Knee, Martin Sostre, the San Quentin 6, etc. and many of the above-mentioned trials have been reported on in Winter Soldier. The information we have is available to any chapter or region upon request; also, we hope that regions will keep us informed of the trials and political repression cases that are being worked on, as well as any new political cases that may arise in the future. With the completion of the National Defense Committee packet, the effectiveness of our defense work should be increased and an understanding of the importance of working on certain trials will be maximized.

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## COMMUNIST PARTY, USA & THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE

VVAW/WSO has always tried to work with other organizations regardless of political ideology that we did not totally agree with, but always demanding a principled relationship. However, it is becoming apparent that the Communist Party, USA and its brainchild, the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression, have increasingly used opportunistic practices and down right lies in relation to our work and the movement as a whole. In National Newsletter #26, this office reprinted a letter from Gary Lawton to Angela Davis, blasting her for opportunistically manipulating the life and death struggles that many political prisoners are waging; but this letter is only the tip of a giant iceberg of opportunism.

It is important for people to understand the history behind Gary's letter. When Angela was still in prison, and thousands of people were coming to her defense, the Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee, even though it was broke and trying to defend three brothers, decided to split whatever monies it raised three ways. One third went to the defense of Lawton, Gardner and Jackson; one third to the defense of Billy Dean Smith; and one third to the defense of Angela Davis. The RPPDC (in which VVAW/WSO was playing a very large role) thought it important that this be done to show solidarity and link up the struggles of all political prisoners. When Angela learned of this move, she wrote to Gary and promised that when she was free, she would immediately begin to help the three Riverside brothers gain their freedom. The CP also made many promises of money, support work and other activities.

Since her release, Angela has not done one concrete thing for the freeing of Lawton and Gardner; and long before she was freed, the CP had reneged on numerous promises to the RPPDC and VVAW/WSO. Yet, Angela, the CP and the Alliance all claim in their publications and in public speeches that they are doing all sorts of work for Gary and Zurebu. That is what finally prompted Gary to write his letter. Even now, after personally receiving the letter, Angela still claims (in the name of the Alliance) that they are working feverishly on Gary's defense.

The case of Ruchell Magee is even more reprehensible in that it was his revolt against slavery that led to Angela's incarceration. VVAW/WSO has been working on Ruchell's defense for the past few months, and we have received painful letters from him laying out his feelings of being used and deserted by the National Alliance and the CP. Yet, the CP claims in a manner similar to that in Gary's case that they are totally supporting Ruchell and feverishly working on his defense. Again, this is pure opportunism, as we know directly from Ruchell that they are not doing anything. In fact, Angela has not even found the time to visit this valiant brother in her many visits to San Jose.

The clearest example of the opportunist practice of the Alliance and the CP, and their unprincipled relations with VVAW/WSO can be seen by looking at the case of the Leavenworth Brothers. We became involved with the defense of these brothers nearly a year ago and initiated the Leavenworth Brothers Offense/Defense Committee. Shortly after the committee was operating and beginning to build a movement around the brothers, a few CP members began relating to the LBODC.

As time passed, more new people joined the committee and it became clear that the majority of these new people were either CP members or sympathizers. These people did nothing in the way of real day-to-day work to defend the brothers, but they did begin raising the question of having the committee affiliate with the Alliance. VVAW/WSO members on the committee opposed this idea (because they were familiar with the Alliance's practice around Gary and Ruchell) but at a meeting when some of the VVAW/WSO members were out of town, a vote was taken and the committee affiliated with the Alliance. In essence, what had happened was that the CP had packed the committee so that the votes were under control. On top of this, the pro-Alliance faction of the committee began to race-bait VVAW/WSO members by saying that the LBODC and VVAW/WSO should no longer share the same office because VVAW/WSO cannot relate to black people. (They said this knowing that all of the Leavenworth Brothers are members of VVAW/WSO!) As a result of tactics like these, the committee became split into two factions (VVAW/WSO and pro-CP) and left the less political, independent members of the committee with a great deal of confusion.

Since the affiliation, the brothers themselves have found it necessary to enter the struggle against their defense committee's involvement with the Alliance. They are very much aware that the only people doing on-going work around their defense are VVAW/WSO members and "independent" people. The pro-Alliance faction, for the most part, has not even found the time to move to Wichita where the trials are going on and where the defense committee is now centered. The brothers are preparing a statement condemning the practice of the Alliance around their particular case. They are painfully aware that since the affiliation took place, neither the Alliance, nor the CP, have done one concrete thing to defend them: their "advocates" on the committee have done nothing to build a movement around the brothers in an on-going way; and the brothers are fed up with hearing that the Alliance is traveling around claiming to be deeply involved with seeing that these brothers are freed. Once again, as with the case of Lawton and Gardner and Ruchell Magee, the Leavenworth Brothers have heard many promises but nothing in the way of concrete work has appeared. They view their affiliation with the Alliance as nothing but a hype for the Alliance and the Party, and they feel that as honest elements, they are rapidly being sold down the river.

What does this all mean for VVAW/WSO? And more importantly, what does it mean for the struggle against imperialism and the mass movement in this country? VVAW/WSO cannot ignore opportunism, especially when it directly affects our work. The CP is clearly using the struggles of prisoners and political repression cases to build themselves up, but at the expense of those brothers and sisters whose lives are on the line. We have done an excellent job of working around political repression in a very principled way, and this is witnessed by the respect we have won from Gary Lawton and the Leavenworth Brothers. In contrast, Gary, Ruchell and the Leavenworth Brothers have nothing but obscenities to offer when discussing their experiences with the CP and the Alliance.

The CP and Alliance have done little in the way of direct support and work for those people that they claim they are defending. What this does is confuse people and divides them against each other. The race-baiting used against VVAW/WSO in the LBODC is a clear example of how far the CP will go in dividing people and confusing the struggle.



Our organization must begin to expose actions like those of the Alliance and the Party. But we must be principled. We must always have the facts or search them out. We must investigate and challenge the validity of the Alliance. The National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression is a mass organization led by the CP. This is not bad in itself and we are not opposed to communist leadership of mass organizations -- a principled leadership won by good practice. But it is increasingly apparent that the CP is using the Alliance to hype itself and is not doing the work it says it is. This kind of practice presents a clear danger to the movement as a whole because it draws honest people into dishonest organizations. If the CP actually supported the struggles of those they profess to be defending and the various defense committees involved with the Alliance, that would be a good thing. However, since this is clearly not what is happening, VVAW/WSO has a responsibility -- both to the membership of our organization, as well as to all people in the U.S. -- to expose the reactionary role the CP is now playing.

At this time, it would be wrong to condemn the Alliance because there are some honest organizations and people in and involved with the Alliance (i. e. Wounded Knee, Puerto Rican Socialist Party) and we cannot condemn them simply because of the practice of the CP. We would therefore suggest that VVAW/WSO begin to use the tools at our disposal (newsletters, Winter Soldier, internal education, meetings, etc) to expose these practices and the manipulative leadership role the CP is playing within the Alliance, and drag them into the light of day. Let the CP answer if they can. We are not out to trash for trashing's sake. We are out to correct bad practice and identify just who are our friends and who are our enemies.



## AMNESTY

Last December, we began our national strategy around universal and unconditional amnesty. At the Antioch, Ohio NSCM, we laid out a program that would carry us through June with a national demonstration in Washington, D. C. in early July. We decided at that time that organizing GIs and badly discharged veterans would be the primary focus. This would be done by beginning discharge upgrading projects, using them as an educational tool in which to discuss amnesty and the need for it. At the Milwaukee NSCM, we decided on the dates, the demands, and the general scenario for the national action and regional actions to be held in May.

What occurred during the first seven months of the year was generally an overall success. Many chapters began the discharge upgrading projects, there were many regional and chapter actions for amnesty, and there was a general recognition that focusing on the less-than-honorably discharged veterans was a good thing. The five demands adopted at the Milwaukee meeting gave an overall anti-imperialist focus to the work and the originally planned demonstration in Washington became a focus for the work that chapters did during the first seven months of this year.

One of the most controversial demands of the amnesty campaign was the universal, unconditional amnesty demand. Many people reported that this demand was the one that drew the most interest and the most questions. We think that this was also good. In linking universal, unconditional amnesty with the other demands, we were able to talk about amnesty and show its connections to the other demands. This was evidenced by the outstanding success of the Washington, D. C. demonstration.

We feel that the work done during the past seven months should continue. Included in this National Office report is a section on the summing up of the practice of the DUPs, which we feel should also continue. In putting forward and linking up the universal and unconditional amnesty demand with the other four used at the demonstration in July, we feel that we can best put forward our anti-imperialist work in a tight, politically correct way. We also see that the practice of the chapters by focusing on the less-than-honorably discharged veterans is the best way to fight for all of these demands.

We should not look at the demonstration in Washington as being the culmination of our amnesty work. It was the culmination of the first phase of the national strategy. In fact, our work continues and we believe that the best way to continue this is to put forward the demands in a series of demonstrations that are outlined in another section of this National Office Report.

Our demonstration in Washington proved that we can put forward anti-imperialist demands, focusing on amnesty, the war, veterans, and Nixon and his class, in a strong and militant way through continued unified action. This is the best way that we can continue to build the anti-imperialist amnesty movement.

## NCUUA

NCUUA has been gaining broad-based support for the universal, unconditional amnesty campaigns. Many organizations are still joining and the Steering Committee still meets to discuss the various ways organizations are putting forward their campaigns. The council endorsed our July action and publicized it in their newsletter and in a general mailing. Not many of the groups turned out large numbers of people, but there was participation at the July demo by representatives of many of these groups. For the future, NCUUA has endorsed the Week of Concern, which will occur at the end of September and will focus on the Indochina War and universal, unconditional amnesty. We expect that many of our chapters will participate in some way in the activities of this week, which is being mainly organized by the United Campaign to End the War. We think that it would be a good thing for chapters to participate in the events, focusing as much as possible on our five demands. To do so would be to give an anti-imperialist focus to the week. Chapters in California are planning a demonstration during the week and have invited the United Campaign to End the War to march with them.

One of the continuing problems with NCUUA is that much of the talk is centered around Congressional bills. Since none of the bills are worth salt, and since these groups suffer from relying on Congress and not on the people of this country, certain political problems arise. But, by the very nature of the council, it is in our best interests to continue raising anti-imperialist views on amnesty and work with the NCUUA organizations.

## Discharge Upgrading in the Amnesty Campaign

Since the last NSCM, more chapters have taken an interest in discharge upgrading work and many have been successful in integrating new members into chapter work around a single-type discharge. But at the same time, there has also been a lot of discouragement and stagnation within many chapters about their DUP work. Some have found it difficult to get vets with bad discharges to come in; some have found the processing of paperwork to be a time-consuming, mundane task that is hard to interest members in doing; others have had great success in finding vets with bad discharges and processing the paperwork, only to then be faced with a great backlog of cases that will take at least a year to be ruled on.

We think these problems stem from the outlook that chapters have toward DUP work. Discharge upgrading was voted by the Steering Committee to be one of the primary tactics in developing our amnesty campaign and the struggle for a single-type discharge. However, it now appears that many chapters look at DUP as an end in itself -- as the overall strategy, instead of a tactic. Now that we have good concrete programs, many chapters have lost sight of the overall campaign and settled "comfortably" into working on a program -- filling out forms and interviewing people. But as with any anti-imperialist work, if politics are not in command, rather than paperwork, then people will always reach a point of stagnation and eventual discouragement. We think this obstacle can be overcome by re-evaluating the political nature of DUP.

We feel that if chapters approached the question of bad discharges from the standpoint of a "campaign for a single-type discharge" that we could avoid stagnation. DUPs should be looked at as only one part of the campaign. The major focus should be on organizing -- organizing vets with bad discharges and other people into local activity, such as demonstrations, leafletting, speaking, petitioning, etc. We need to identify for the public the people we are trying to help. Without this public identification, our demand will become weak and meaningless for most Americans. It will be falling into what we have described before as "witnessing against imperialism" rather than fighting against imperialism -- it is "anti-imperialism-in-the-sky" rather than anti-imperialism-in-the-streets. If we think only in terms of processing paperwork, we will only be identifying these vets for ourselves and the government, and not the general public. Without taking these cases off the paper and putting them before the American people, we will only be spinning our wheels.

Many of you will say that we must "flood the boards" with discharge cases. We agree that it can only help to have the boards flooded; but that is only one of the many forms of public pressure. Furthermore, we don't think it is up to VVAW/WSO to do the flooding. Our role should be to provide leadership and an anti-imperialist focus. A quick look at the hundreds of schools and organizations around the country now offering discharge counseling is a good indication of how far the campaign has come, and is also an indication of where the flooding will come from. Discharge upgrading has become such an issue among vets groups, that by the end of the year, virtually every office relating to Vietnam-era vets will be offering some counseling about bad discharges; many already will process the paperwork. The momentum has been created (much to VVAW/WSO's credit). It is now time to evaluate what the conditions are today and develop our strategy from there.

Our evaluation of where we are today suggests that the following points should guide the work of VVAW/WSO's campaign for a single-type discharge in the coming months. Focus on ACTION projects -- petitions at plant gates, unemployment offices; picket lines, selling the paper and the amnesty booklet; and regular demonstrations. Concentrate on organizing people into the campaign, rather than organizing paperwork into Washington. The focus should be ACTION.

For some projects, this may mean cutting back on the number of cases that they are taking on. If you find that you do have to cut back, don't turn anyone away without first thoroughly explaining your local campaign, the political reasons for the campaign and the possibilities for getting involved. In the long run, a chapter will contribute more to eliminating the bad discharge system if it relies on 20 vets with bad discharges actively working in a local campaign, than if it exhausts the chapter preparing 100 cases that will only sit on someone's desk in Washington for a year.

Raise the imperialist political nature of the bad discharge system. In all of our work, we should be constantly pointing out how the bad discharge is used as a disciplinary measure to keep enlisted people in line. It should also be pointed out that the U. S. is one of the few countries in the world that has a multiple discharge system. Now that more and more groups are realizing the need for a universal upgrading of all bad discharges; it is even more important for us to expose the whole discharge system for what it is. The more people who understand the reasons for bad discharges and how the discharge system comes down hardest on work-



ing class and third world people, the better our chances of eliminating the multiple discharge system entirely. Remember that a single-type discharge is more than just amnesty for those who already have bad discharges; it means abolishing the system entirely.

The final point we would like to raise is the longrange nature of the discharge campaign. One serious political problem that we think could easily arise in the future is that amnesty will be granted with all Vietnam-era bad discharges upgraded, but without abolishing the whole discharge system. If we haven't built a strong campaign by then, we could have the wind taken right out of our sails. Universal amnesty would of course be a great victory, but if we don't prepare ourselves, the granting of amnesty would mean that we would never regain the momentum for abolishing the discharge system. A lot of the momentum right now is coming from people who are not consciously anti-imperialist; they support amnesty for one reason or another, but if amnesty is granted, they won't be sticking around to see the discharge system abolished; neither will the majority of the 500,000 Vietnam-era veterans who will have their discharges upgraded. It would be just like the signing of the Paris Agreement. If everyone in the anti-war movement would have been a conscious anti-imperialist, they would have continued their work in spite of the signing of the Agreement. That's why it's important to develop a conscious anti-imperialist outlook around the discharge system, as well as organizing people into the campaign who are directly affected. We need to do more than just witness against imperialism; we need to build a strong, anti-imperialist campaign to end the bad discharge system. That is the only way we will be able to carry the campaign through to the end, even in the face of amnesty being granted by the government.

**BUILD A FIGHTING CAMPAIGN FOR A SINGLE-TYPE DISCHARGE !!!**

**UNITY - STRUGGLE - VICTORY!**



## JULY 1-4 DEMONSTRATION ANALYSIS

(We are presenting here a political analysis of how the National Collective viewed the July 1-4 national action in Washington, D. C. While we will briefly comment on the logistical aspects of the organizing that went into the July action, we will concentrate on the larger political issues that emerged from the demonstration).

Overall, the July 1-4 action must be viewed as a resounding success for both VVAW/WSO and for the general anti-imperialist movement. It was the most militant, best organized and led action we've yet held on a national level. It was also the most intense period of struggle the national organization has yet been through in an action situation and the organization grew incredibly as a result of it. In Washington we were basically trying to establish a strong anti-imperialist position, on a national level, in two very important struggles: the movement for universal and unconditional amnesty and the rising veterans' movement. (While these two movements obviously dovetail very closely with each other, they should be viewed separately). Both of these struggles are faced with the difficult task of being led as part of the general anti-imperialist movement and not as narrow reformist movements that do not tie into the larger questions surrounding the very nature of our system.

We were successful in both these accounts in our actions in D. C. The issue of universal and unconditional amnesty and the demand for amnesty for veterans was raised in D. C. in a manner that those concerned with the national amnesty movement will have great difficulty ignoring. Similarly, the development of the anti-imperialist veterans' movement took a big step forward in Washington and dealt a severe blow to the opportunist-misleaders of the veterans' movement who have done their best to see that the vets' movement remains impotent and incapable of winning real victories for veterans. These are the so-called veterans' groups that consciously strive to see that vets don't deal with their primary source of oppression, U. S. imperialism, but just try to get a few handouts here and there from the VA.

More than anything else, the July demo showed the need for a militant, fighting anti-imperialist organization focusing on the needs of vets and GIs. It also showed that VVAW/WSO was well suited to become that organization. We saw that the militance of the demonstrators in Washington was qualitatively greater than in any of our previous actions. During the conduct of the demonstration, we consistently found that when we relied on our primary strength, the united, militant mass action of the people, that we could win really important victories. We also found that most of the major mistakes we made in Washington occurred precisely because we didn't rely on the people but became overly concerned with purely external forces, police, courts, etc, and failed to let our initiative be determined by mass action. It is upon this militance that we must build our movement and our organization in the future.

While it was obviously not reflective of all regions in D. C., the primary failure of the July action was seen to lie with the inability of some regional leadership to truly reflect the militance of their regional contingent. Some regional lead-

ership repeatedly tailed behind their people, consistently making right errors in trying to represent them. Time and time again in Washington this occurred: the people were three steps ahead of their leaders!

In some instances, regional leadership saw its role as being sort of a walking ballot box -- passively taking the votes of its contingent to develop a collective position. This is correctly a task that a voting machine should perform -- it is definitely not the role leadership should see itself in. What is increasingly going to be needed in VVAW/WSO is dynamic, out with the people, primary leadership that can take the initiative and place itself in the vanguard of the struggle.

In other cases, regional leadership objectively tried to tone down the initiative and militance of their people. An example would be those regional leaders that repeatedly pushed a "the cops are gonna get us if we do thus and so" line, both in their contingents and during the nightly NSC meetings. Such a position, in addition to needlessly adding more tension to the situation served to cloud the objective conditions we were operating under during the demo. It came basically from a failure to base our actions on a determination of where our people were at, but rather trying to second guess where the "man" was at. The point should have been that we had the initiative during the entire situation, not the "man."

The most obvious example of another such failure to rely on the people and to concentrate solely on second-guessing the cops occurred on Tuesday night. There, the tactical leadership for the night, which did contain a member of the National Office, as well as regional leadership, decided against holding the demo as we left the mall solely on the basis of what they thought the cops were going to do. If we fail to base our plans and actions on our primary strength, the people, we will continue to make such errors.

We need strong, militant regional leadership that will be the vanguard force in leading the fight for our demands. This must be seen as one of the most crucial problems facing VVAW/WSO today. Unless regional leadership is seen in this way, and unless it is up to the task, regions will develop defeatist outlooks or fall into reformism and thereby hold back the initiative of the people and the further growth of the organization.

A few words need to be said on the incredible support we received in building for Washington from a number of other organizations. Much of our success in Washington can be directly attributed to the work these other groups did to build for the action -- in terms of propaganda around it in communities across the nation, material support and actually organizing people to go to D.C. This was the first time VVAW/WSO seriously attempted to have other organizations fully participate in one of our national actions. We organized the demonstration, set up its structure and its political thrust and then asked other groups to fit into that structure. The results of it speak for themselves. When we can have principled unity with other forces we not only should, but must, try to unite with them. The broader the unity we can achieve, the stronger our overall impact will be.

### Building Actions

Building for the national action in Washington was done in a programmatic, unified way. It marked the first time that the organization has done this in any real way -- tying the demands of the demonstration to our on-going work of our chapters. We began building for the action in January and the building was part of a strategy of action for the organization (i. e. at Yellow Springs, we talked about building DUPs as part of building for the demonstration). Materials used for building the action were drawn up so that they would fit easily into that strategy and this strategy was basically carried out in a unified way around the country. We think that overall this was a big step for the organization to take and that it was successful.

There are several points, however, that should be brought up. It is important for us to understand that building for a major demonstration should not be seen apart from the day-to-day work of the chapter. In order to use a building action successfully, it is imperative that the action be based in an area where there has been day-to-day work beforehand, and where the exposure of the organization and our demands can reach people who can be won over to them. It would be useless or futile to have a demonstration in a city 50 miles away from an active chapter.

We think that the type of demonstrations that were most successful were the ones held in Milwaukee and Cincinnati. Milwaukee's regional action was a take-over of the VA followed by a car caravan throughout the city focusing on the five demands and putting them forward as part of the overall strategy. In Cincinnati, the chapters marched through three miles of the city and ended with a rally. These actions were not apart from the chapters' daily work. In both cities, these had been done before and will be done again, but they did build for the demonstration.

We feel that there should have been more building actions and that in the future the NSCM must recognize the importance of these actions based on our practice and knowing how we added to our strategy towards the end of June. Many chapters felt that it was necessary to have another building demonstration. For instance, the New York City chapter felt that it was vital to have a demonstration in the city, in addition to participating in the regional demo at West Point. (This was done because the West Point demo was not an integral part of their daily work). They then took over the VA regional office one week prior to July 1. We think that this was very good. In the future, we should plan more demonstrations leading up to the major national one. While we didn't see the necessity for this in Milwaukee at the NSCM, we now see that it is imperative to do this.

We think that the use of the posters and stickers was excellent. The organization pasted up over 175,000 stickers in the two months prior to the demonstration. This too, was a good way to make it known that we were going to Washington. In the future this will be done again, and it could even be handy for chapters to do this regularly around local work.

While some regions did little work around building for the demonstration and some built the demonstration in isolation from the day-to-day work of their chapters, we feel that the organization did well -- we made our points in our communities and



we made our point in Washington. We learned most clearly that what happened over the past seven months was that we had a program of work; that it was carried out in a unified way and that this is the only way that we can continue to put forward our demands as part of our daily work.

#### Logistics

Planning for the July action began well in advance of the demonstration itself. Several months prior to it, the National Office drew up a list of jobs that were seen as being necessary to lay the logistical groundwork for the action. These six jobs were: 1) scenario/liasion; 2) press; 3) administration/speakers; 4) food/equipment; 5) commo/medical/campsite organization/security 6) legal/chapter liaison, childcare. Together they formed the general tasks performed by the Demonstration Logistics Committee (DLC). As mandated by the National Steering Committee, the National Office picked the members of the DLC in April and May.

The six people picked for the DLC office in Washington had been fully briefed as to what their actual role and tasks would be. In addition to having prior experience in the particular job they were picked to fulfill, they understood that their role was solely that of logistical support and not overall demonstration leadership. During our last national action (Gainesville), the people laying the groundwork for the demonstration saw themselves as being the leadership of the actions. In Washington, as opposed to this, it was clearly stated from the beginning that the Washington DLC was not leadership for the demonstration. That was correctly the responsibility of the NSC, and that was the body that did in fact serve as the leadership of the demonstration.

By and large, the National Office feels that this system of organizing a logistics committee to lay the groundwork for a national action was ideal. We felt that this committee with its very specific jobs was exactly what was needed; rather than having an overflowing crowd of people who wanted to work on the demo, as was the case in Gainesville. Despite extremely adverse conditions, things did run very smoothly and efficiently. The incredible work that the members of the DLC did cannot be overstated.

In addition to the six people that made up the DLC, we had planned to pull in other people one week prior to the demonstration to head up specific teams, i. e. medical, food, commo. Unfortunately, we were only able to get one person for the commo work. The others that we had contacted couldn't make it. What we need in the future is to have back-up people who can come in to fill vacant slots if necessary. There was one other problem with the committee. The person we had assigned for press work didn't show up and as a result we had press people for only two weeks before the demonstration began. While these two people did a magnificent job, it is clear that working on press should have begun two weeks earlier.

When the demonstration began there was a lot of confusion around setting up the medical teams, etc. This resulted partially from the lack of having someone working on this in advance, and also not having fully understood that it was necessary to have a list of people from the regions who would work on the various support teams. Despite this confusion, teams were set up and they worked hard to do their jobs. There



were also problems with getting relief for people when shifts changed, but this was a by-product of not having lists of people who would work on the teams; these lists are vital to have at the next major demonstration.

In summing up the role of the various support teams, we feel that it is essential to define these teams as to how they fit into the structure of the demonstration. All of the support teams -- medical, commo, security, cooking, camp administration -- should be looked at as service teams. That is to say that these services are for the benefit of the people at the demonstration and as such, should be seen in the light of being under the leadership of the NSC.

There was a tendency for some of the people on the support teams to view themselves as APART from the demonstration. For example, on one occasion, the radio operator for one of the tactical leaders of a march was walking 100 feet ahead of him talking to herself. The radio operator should have been at the side of the tactical leader. That is where they are needed. If an emergency communication was to have been made, there could have been incredible disorder. It should be pointed out that on the last day this situation was rectified and the commo team did an excellent job of providing service. This rule should apply to all the support teams.

Another question around the service teams is that they should be headed up by competent people whose sole job is to organize the people working on the team. For the most part this was done, but several times people working in these areas assumed other responsibilities and as a result had to divide their time between providing leadership for the overall demonstration and providing leadership for a particular support team. These "independent" leaders of the support teams have enough work cut out for them and they should not have to be burdened with other duties. Conversely, leadership of the demonstration should not have to be burdened with assuming support work duties.

One other point should be made about the general relationship of the demonstration and the support teams. In terms of making political, tactical decisions, it is important that input from support teams be listened to, but that in the final analysis, the leadership of the demonstration should make the ultimate tactical decision, based on the spirit of the demonstrators. On several occasions, support team leaders objected to the tactical decisions made. While this is admirable in that the concern for their particular team was foremost, it is not always the most correct political decision.

Overall, we feel that support people responded in an outstanding manner throughout the entire demonstration. The support teams were faced with overwhelming difficulties, i.e. the heat, lack of sleep, numerous medical emergencies, faulty equipment, etc. In spite of this, they did provide the service that was necessary to carry on the demonstration. For this we, as an organization, should be proud. Throughout the years, we have gotten better and better in holding major demonstrations. Based on the practice of logistical people at this demonstration, we see the next one flowing more smoothly and expertly.

## NATIONAL PROGRAM

With the successful completion of the national demonstration in Washington, the 7-month program that was accepted at Yellow Springs NSCM is at an end. We believe that this program was very successful. Without it, the demo would not have come off as well as it did because it would not have related to any day-to-day work that this organization was doing. We also believe that the success of the program clearly points out the necessity for continued long-range planning. With regard to the first program, the demo was to be only a part of the overall strategy and not the end unto itself. Therefore, a continued program is vital.

There is a solid foundation on which to build a program of work for the future--the five demands of the Washington action. We believe that these demands provide the necessary link between immediate needs and more general, anti-imperialist issues that are vital to the growth of the anti-imperialist movement. Also, the majority of our membership have a good grasp of these demands and have already done much groundwork in bringing them to their communities. We must not lose this initiative gained by the Washington demonstration.

Because we feel that it is important to have a national program on which to build VVAW/WSO in a systematic way, we would suggest the use of the following scenario of dates and their political significance. These dates would provide the focus for nationwide actions around our five demands, though they would of course only be the "high points" in the campaigns which we build on a day-to-day basis.

September---Anti-Nixon demos  
October 28---Vets Day/VA  
November 11--Vets Day/VA

January 27---Indochina  
March 29---Vietnam Vets Day  
May 16---Armed Forces Day

The anti-Nixon demos, of course, will depend upon concrete conditions at that time. In fact, Nixon may have already been canned by the time you read this. If that is the case, we suggest victory celebrations that will also point to the fact that Nixon is just a representative of a class of people--namely, imperialists. The reason for the two dates for Veterans Day is that the Federal Date is different from the day set aside in many states. Some states even have "celebrations" on both days. Actions can occur on both days (again depending on the concrete conditions) and they may range from marching in the "official" parades to actions at the VA. The January action should again focus on Indochina and the violations of the agreement by the U. S. and Thieu. Vietnam Veterans Day in March is self-explanatory and the variety of militant actions which took place this year should be repeated in the future. The May date was selected because we feel it necessary that Armed Forces Day be resurrected and the militant actions that used to take place near military bases all over the country should be revived.

When organizing for these demonstrations, it is important that we involve other groups and individuals, and work to help them understand the importance of our actions. This can either be done through coalition work, or in a manner similar to the DC demo where we got groups to support our demands and planned activities. The support we obtained from other organizations and people was one of the keys to the success of the Washington demonstration; thus, we should also actively attempt to retain the support of non-VVAW/WSO people as we approach these future actions. It may also be helpful for regions to try and coordinate their actions with each other so that demonstrations are being approached in a similar way. This will give a

higher degree of continuity to our organization's campaign.

It is important to realize that these demonstrations/actions can only be viewed as the "high points" of our work to put our demands before the American people. Because of this, these demonstrations will mean very little if they are not integrated into our day-to-day work on the chapter level. Many chapters have relied solely on DUPs as the means to carry out daily work, but DUP can only be a part of our work around these five demands. Selling Winter Soldier, setting up picket lines, leafletting on a consistent basis, door-to-door petitioning campaigns, setting up tables and doing outreach at areas where vets and GIs are likely to be found, media blitzes, things like the VA "shit list," educational fund-raisers and film showings, raising our demands in coalition work, getting out agitational propaganda in any way possible; all these tactics must be employed to give breadth to an anti-imperialist campaign around our demands. As an example, a table could be set up at an unemployment office that would be staffed several times a week. This would give us an opportunity to engage people--especially unemployed vets--in conversation and give out literature. Another idea would be to sell Winter Soldier at a VA on a regular--basis--same time every week. Again, this would provide the means by which to talk with people. All of these are merely suggestions. What is important is to see the need for consistent work in reaching out to people.

Building for actions like these we have suggested can enhance our day-to-day work to a point where the two types of activity are inseparable, and this is how it should be. It is true that our day-to-day, grass-roots work is the basis of VVAW/WSO and it is this sort of practice that reveals what we are as an organization. But at the same time, actions planned to compliment this daily work will prove that we are a fighting organization, determined to take our demands before the people of this country. The two aspects of a yearly program (visible actions and daily work around our demands) will have to go hand-in-hand. They must be closely integrated, and carrying out one aspect of this program in isolation from the other will not be nearly as effective as concentrating on both aspects at the same time.

With regard to carrying out a national program, it is important to point out the necessity of developing good styles of work. We must thoroughly grasp the lessons of the Washington demonstration because if we make the same mistakes in our future work, we will be holding back the struggle against imperialism. We again stress that there is a big difference between the attitude of "anti-imperialism in the sky" and the realization that the fight against imperialism is a life and death struggle. This latter attitude should be the one which guides all of our work. If we do not approach our work with the understanding that peoples' lives are at stake, then we will lose the support of the people we are trying to reach and come off as a bunch of elitists.

To better improve our methods of work, we must sharpen our ability to analyze our various activities, particularly the mistakes we make. Only through analyzing our work can we then learn to improve it and make it more effective. An example of how we should learn from our work is the disparity between the success Milwaukee has had in their actions at the VA in drawing in new members (primarily veterans), and the lack of response among vets that New York City has met with in their actions at the VA. We must analyze our actions such as this, learn where we are making mistakes and correct them. We must begin to develop ways in which



chapters can exchange their experiences and knowledge so that correct summaries of our work can be drawn up. We should share ideas on how to draw in new members (i. e. the importance or lack thereof of personal contact, avoiding "cliquishness, etc), and where these new potential members can be found (i/e/ the VA, unemployment lines, campuses, welfare offices, the work-place, bars--near military bases to find GIs--transportation centers where GIs will be travelling through, etc. ). We need to more thoroughly and effectively share our organizing experiences with one another so that we can learn from one another's practice. One of the ways to do this is for chapters to send an analysis of their actions to the National Office. These should not focus on the chronology of the action, but on the manner in which it was done, how people were approached, how people were recruited, etc. If these reports can be kept concise and fairly short, they can be gotten out to all regions via the national newsletter. Another way in which we could more effectively analyze and rectify our work would be to hold special workshops on these specific problems of style of work. These would be similar to the National Defense Committee workshops which have been held between NSCMs, and which have proved to be highly successful for getting down to the brass tacks of a problem.

The necessity of developing good methods of work cannot be stressed enough. Doing a regular summing-up and analysis of work will help us to better implement the program that we select to build VVAW/WSO in a systematic way. A program is a vital thing for the continued existence of an organization, and to make that program more effective, we must learn from our successes and our errors. We should actively entrench ourselves in more programmatic work on all levels of the organization; and along with this, we should also more thoroughly criticize our styles of work so that the growing anti-imperialist movement can be made stronger, and better able to attack imperialism at its weakest points.

## GIs

Overall, our work among GIs has increased dramatically since the last NSCM, both at the National GI Project Offices and among GI chapters. Prior to the July demo several projects on the east coast were visited by the people from both Project offices. Members from the Dayton office visited the Defense Committee in Norfolk, Virginia, and did outreach work to build for the demo. One of the people from the Chicago office made a two-week trip to bases further south, including Ft Bragg, Charleston, and Camp Lejeune. (Details of these trips will be reported in the GI workshop.) In Japan, the Yokosuka Chapter of VVAW/WSO has been devoting most of the energy recently to setting up a defense committee for the sailors from the USS MIDWAY who recently walked off the ship. On June 30th, they sponsored another outdoor concert which was attended by several hundred GIs. In Iwakuni, Japan, the chapter there has recently been petitioning and leafletting in support of the Korean people who are resisting the dictatorship of Pak Jung Hee. In Heidelberg, Germany, GIs are beginning to form a chapter and the people at the GI center and the people who publish FIGHT BACK sponsored a gathering on July 6th in solidarity with the demands being raised in Washington, DC. Work around the US Disciplinary Barracks at Leavenworth, Kansas, has been on the increase, with the Dayton Office coordinating most of the work in that area. Problems with communication in and out of the prison have come up in the last few months and the authorities there have refused to allow Winter Soldier to be sent in, even though we have written permission from the Commander. As was pointed out in the national newsletter, we see the USDB as a very important focal point in work among GIs. (Details of the work around the USDB will be elaborated in the GI workshop.)

The National GI Conference that was called by the NSC at the last meeting for Labor Day has been rescheduled. The Denver Chapter had originally volunteered to host the Conference and do the necessary pre-conference work. In the last few months, however, the Denver chapter has found itself unable to carry out its commitment due to a number of problems. Given the importance of this conference, we feel that the Denver chapter should be criticized for taking on a task that it was not able to complete. The lack of work that had been done forced us to re-schedule the conference, forcing a number of people in other organizations to miss the conference due to prior arrangements they had made for time off work. Immediately after the DC demo, the National Collective and representatives from the GI offices met to discuss the GI Conference. After members of the Chicago Chapter agreed to work on the conference, we decided to move the Conference to Chicago; we also moved the date to mid-October to give people in the GI Movement (including ourselves) more time to prepare. Another item discussed at this meeting was changing the format of GI NEWS from a newsletter to an 8-page newspaper. We felt that both the style and the lower cost of newsprint made the new format more desirable for building activity among GIs. The first issue will come out during the latter part of August. With the new format, we see a much wider distribution, and we hope that chapters will begin doing regular outreach near military bases in conjunction with selling Winter Soldier.

## FUTURE GI WORK

We base our analysis on the fact that GIs are oppressed and the fact that the US military is a major tool of imperialism. We feel that GIs should not just be organized for the sake of organizing against their own immediate oppression, but against the entire role of the US military as a tool of imperialism. We're not just interested

in sprinkling a little sand in the gears of the military; we would like to see the whole military machine turned back on its operators. If the US military were crippled by the working class which makes up the backbone of the military, it would be a giant stride forward in the overall struggle to end imperialism.

We feel, therefore, that the organization in its daily work and at the National GI Conference in October should push the following overall principles: 1) The GI movement should be anti-imperialist; 2) there should be a cohesive national program and organization; and 3) the focus should be on organizing, not service. To elaborate, we feel that GIs can't be organized into "anti-imperialism in the sky" anymore than vets can. But issues on a particular base or post can be put into an anti-imperialist context. Every local gripe with the military flows from the uses of the military under imperialism.

Secondly, we feel that a program which is relevant to servicepeople all over the world is essential. The demand for a single-type discharge for all vets offers the best possibility. From this demand, GIs can tie in virtually all other forms of oppression in the military since the ultimate form of discipline that the military holds over a GI for resisting is the bad discharge. Racism, living and working conditions, the UCMJ, sexual oppression and the lack of 1st Amendment rights can all be tied into the call for a single discharge, but by focusing on the discharge system we will be able to sharpen the fight against racism, since the disciplinary system is clearly racist; and we will be able to begin explaining the imperialist nature of the discharge system and the entire role of the military. It also means that anywhere a GI is transferred he or she will be able to tie into the campaign for a single-type discharge. Local work, of course, must go on; however, we feel that the single discharge campaign can provide the unifying thread for all work among GIs.

Finally, we feel that work around GIs must focus on helping GIs to organize themselves. Ideally, there would be support groups in and around every base; but this is not possible, nor can we afford to wait until it is. We should concentrate on agitating--showing GIs that they can fight back--and turning out to support them when they need support. We should not be devoting our primary effort to providing services; there are other groups equipped to handle counseling. This doesn't mean that we won't help GIs find competent military lawyers if they run into trouble. What it does mean is that this will only be a small part of our work. The primary work should be on getting GIs to fight back--to show them that they have the same real strength that thousands of people displayed in Washington, DC in July.



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