



Progressive Labor Party

G. I. Newsletter

September '72

- \* Fight against UCMJ at Hood, Aberdeen
- \* VVAW leaflets, demonstrates at  
National Guard riot control H.Q.
- \* The "Volunteer" Army - bosses' bullshit
- \* Fight to free Billy Smith nationwide



# PUT THE ARMY



## ON TRIAL

On Saturday, August 26, the Fort Hood United Front is going to put the Army on trial for crimes against G.I.s and people all over the world. The trial will take place at Long Branch Park. The new park at the end of Rancier Avenue (behind the bowlerama). There will be a picnic and entertainment for all.

Testimony will tell the public of racism, harassment, war crimes in Viet Nam, unfair Article 15s, pre-trial confinement, barracks conditions housing in Killeen and pay rip-offs.

**AUGUST 26th**

**1:00 PM**

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At Fort Hood, the base-wide campaign against Article 15 was linked to organizing in individual companies. A Co. 1/5 Cav started their own petition protesting the excessive number of 15's being handed out. 124th Maintenance organized around grievances concerning living conditions in the unit. The brass got uptight, first transferred then discharged a PL member who had been organizing in the 124th. The "Secretarial" discharge "in the interests of national security" -- a very unusual procedure -- came down on a couple of days notice! Indicating how worried the Army is about anyone rocking the boat in the MVA.

CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

Also at Fort Hood, the Killen Area Concerned Women have been building a fight against local landlords. The group tries to combine discussion and education about sexism with community organization.

GI's at Aberdeen Proving Ground have also been working on company-level organizing. EM confronted their CO over discipline, living and working conditions. An interesting aspect of the APG struggle was that guys there demanded elected representatives on the R&E Relations Council. These councils, set up at many bases, are intended by the brass to be powerless and merely do a PR job for the Army. But the idea at APG is to turn this around by using the council as an organizing tool to fight for concrete demands.

The DC Area GI Alliance has followed up their July 12 Free Billy Smith demonstration with organizing around a petition demanding UCMJ reform. At Fort Belvoir guys have been using the "human relations council" to demand review of Article 15's.

An active-duty GI organization at Travis AFB has issued a call for a GI conference this fall. (Reprinted here from CAMP NEWS). They point out that increased co-ordination would help break down the isolation which is often a big problem with GI groups. Also it might be possible to develop a more unified strategy for the movement. They need FEEDBACK from people who are interested in this -- write to GIM Convention, PO Box 487, Suisun City, CA 94585. Maybe it would also be possible for people to arrange conferences in other areas (Germany?)

#### PROPOSAL

This proposal concerns the holding of a convention for the formation of a national GI Movement organization.

The suggested convention would be held some time in the fall of this year. Suggestions as to the length and the dates of the convention are solicited at this time. It is our suggestion that each group send representatives. These should be two active-duty GIs. Civilians may accompany these GIs but will not serve as representatives of the group. Special arrangements may be made for groups whose GIs are unable to attend the convention.

During the convention, the representatives of each group will give a presentation of their group's goals, policies, past achievements, future plans and capabilities.

After these presentations, the convention would then proceed to discuss topics relative to the GI Movement. These topics will be gathered from correspondence returned from your group concerning pertinent matters you feel should be discussed during the convention. (such things as GI Movement policies, actions, structure, etc.)

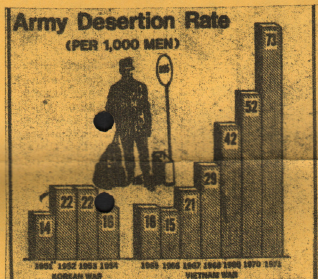
Either before or after these discussions, the convention should proceed to discuss and formulate a platform for a national GI Movement organization. After the platform has been drawn up, the convention should then pursue the task of structuring the GI Movement organization. Be sure to discuss this with the members of your group and come to the convention prepared with ideas for the structure of the national GI Movement organization.

The convention's final action should be to draw up a statement for release to the news media.

We would also like suggestions as to the place the convention should be held. We feel it should be in central or mid-western US and more specific ideas or alternatives are welcome.

We are awaiting your feedback on these proposals so that we may co-ordinate the suggestions from all the groups and continue to plan for the convention. We will be sending more correspondence concerning the convention later. If, however, we receive much unfavorable mail (or no mail at all) we'll notify you concerning an indefinite postponement.

P.S. Write to: GIM Convention  
P.O. Box 487  
Suisun City, CA 94585



# The New York Times

ADOLPH S. OCHS, Publisher 1896-1925  
ARTHUR HAYS SULZBERGER, Publisher 1925-1961  
ORVILLE E. DRYFOOS, Publisher 1961-1968

## Draft and Election

President Nixon's pledge to eliminate the draft, if re-elected, may go down in history—along with his vow to end the Vietnam war—as the twentieth century's most ingenious contribution to the art of electioneering: the "two-campaign promise." Mr. Nixon ran successfully on that platform in 1968. Now, with the target date for a draft-free army set for July 1973, he is campaigning on the same promise again.

One irony in this admitted bid for the youth vote is that abolition of the draft is clearly a rubber promise. The Administration counts on the Selective Service Act and the machinery erected under it remaining intact. All that the President has in mind is to refrain from asking Congress to renew his induction authority, which expires next June 30. And even this is on the assumption that pay raises, other inducements and a campaign to glorify the armed services will bring in enough volunteers next year. That is a big "if."

A still greater irony in the promise of a draft-free army is that it might well do more damage to American security than Senator McGovern's proposed defense budget cut of \$30 billion over three years, which the Administration has termed a "white flag surrender budget," asserting it would undermine American strength both militarily and in negotiations with the Soviet Union.

The current reduction in draft calls to 50,000 for 1972 has been made possible by the sharp cutback in the over-all strength of the armed forces—from 3.5 to 2.3 million—resulting from Vietnam troop withdrawals. But once draftees now in service are released and all enlistments must be truly voluntary, rather than draft-stimulated, there is reason to doubt that even the present high pay levels would entice enough young men from civilian life to maintain a high-quality military establishment of 2.3-million men—particularly in boom times. In the likely event of a shortfall, it would be necessary to decrease the size of the armed forces below two-million men, and perhaps even below the 1.74-million level proposed by Senator McGovern, or to raise pay further or to do both.

The New York Times, a mouthpiece for the liberal capitalists, has laid bare the real plans of their class for the U.S. military: the draft will never really disappear from the scene.

As continued U.S. presence in Vietnam proves to be a losing cause for profits, military manpower requirements have been temporarily reduced. But the New York Times anticipates future imperialist "conflicts" and they conclude that the "M.V.A." will be expensive and impractical.

McGovern and Nixon will both attempt to consolidate the position of U.S. business in the world markets (in the face of growing Soviet and Japanese competition). The "volunteer" army is an attempt by Nixon and McGovern, who both agree on the idea, to buy off opposition to the military and its use to protect bosses' profits. As soon as inter-imperialist rivalry boils over talk of the volunteer army will be scuttled and new higher draft calls will be the order of the day.

Average military pay already has much more than doubled since 1964, a rate of increase twice that for factory workers. The average recruit's pay by January will be up 326 per cent in less than a decade. Almost 60 per cent of the American defense budget already is going into personnel costs—double the Soviet percentage—wiping out the expected Vietnam "peace dividend" and lifting defense spending to an estimated \$76.5 billion even before recent increases for the intensified fighting in Vietnam. The Brookings Institution estimates that spending will exceed \$100 billion by 1977 under the Administration's present five-year plan.

High pay levels may be needed to attract and keep talented officers and technicians for the armed services. But the attempt to do away with the draft by paying the equivalent of civilian wages to recruits is likely to be an expensive failure and, in the event of mobilization—in the words of an Administration authority—"would bankrupt the country."

As long as the world situation requires large armed forces, a continued draft—coupled with less exaggerated pay levels for recruits, more austere weapons systems and sharp cutbacks in new-model-every-year procurement policies—could permit an actual strengthening of American defense capabilities at substantial savings below presently projected defense expenditure levels. This is the profound belief of many of the nation's best-qualified defense experts. It is the defense budget issue the candidates should be debating. Instead, the Democrats have accepted Mr. Nixon's volunteer army proposals and the proposed major cutbacks in forces as well as weapons systems.

Quite apart from its practicality under existing conditions, the basic concept of a volunteer army needs more thorough debate than the candidates are providing. Military life through the ages necessarily has been conducted under different rules and criteria than those regulating the civilian community. Anyone who has served temporarily as a civilian-in-uniform is acutely aware of the relative isolation of the military compound from the rest of society, particularly in a democracy.

A small professional army, such as the United States maintained between World Wars I and II, is one thing. But the massive armed forces both candidates propose—whether 2.3 million or 1.74 million men—is best kept a citizens' army, responsive to civilian control.



# V.V.A.W.

showed up, hundreds strong, at the Republican Convention to confront Nixon around the demands of:

- End the War
- Free the VVAW leaders indicted for conspiracy
- Free Billy Dean Smith
- Jobs and decent benefits for vets, improvement of VA hospital care.

Actions included a march to National Guard headquarters, where vets explained to Guardsmen over a bullhorn the purpose of the protest, and handed out an anti-racist control pamphlet written by the Ft Bragg GI Union.

Since then VVAW has been leading the fight to free Billy Smith, with rallies on the West Coast, where the trial has begun, as well as in New York (outside the Army recruiting office in Harlem.)

Where does VVAW go next? Many vets are discussing building a fight for Veteran's benefits (VA, GI bill, and unemployment). It's crucial for VVAW to organize a serious campaign around these domestic issues, as well as the war, if the organization is to survive and grow.



# Jack Anderson

## STICKY FINGERS: II

### WASHINGTON

The armed forces follow a double standard of justice in dealing with shoplifters. The punishment, apparently, depends upon their rank.

We have obtained dozens of arrest records which accuse high-ranking officers of filching petty items from military PXs. We selected 23 of these cases for spot investigations.

We found only one retired lieutenant colonel who had been hauled into court. Five others were chewed out by their superiors. The remaining 17 were "exonerated," or the charges were quietly dropped.

In contrast, enlisted men caught shoplifting usually faced formal charges. Related one inspector: "When officers are picked up for shoplifting, they are simply released. When enlisted men are stopped, they are turned over to the MPs, sent to general court and . . . convicted of petty larceny." The inspector who complained about this discrimination, incidentally, was harassed. Another security officer, who urged that high-ranking thievery be investigated instead of covered up, was fired.

Typical was the case of Col. Robert P. Gould, who was accused of pocketing a \$4.75 eight-track tape cassette of "The Partridge Family Sound Magazine" last Christmas eve from the PX at Andrews Air Force Base. The arrest records indicate that a benevolent security inspector tried to signal Gould "in the hope he would . . . by for the tape." But the colonel missed his cue.

Once outside, the inspector was obliged to stop Gould, who denied that he had snatched the \$4.75 item. He explained that he had left the tape inside the PX and offered to reenter the store to prove it. Then, according to the arrest record, Gould "bent over to show me where it was, and I observed him taking the tape from underneath his coat and placing it on the shelf and saying: 'Here it is, right here.'"

The accused colonel, who heads an air-to-air missile program for the Air Force, denied he had lifted the tape. Subsequently, his superiors "totally exonerated" him of all charges.

Other brass hats accused of light-fingered thefts received similar soft treatment. Their reactions to our inquiries, in a few cases, are worth recording:

■ A retired Army general, caught swindling the Fort Myer, Va., PX of a 29-cent roll of splicing tape on July 7, first denied stealing the merchandise, then said he couldn't recollect "for sure" whether he had pocketed it. The Army, of course, gave him the benefit of the doubt.

■ A discomfited Air Force major was so embarrassed when he purchased a package of prophylactics from a female cashier, he explained to us, that he "completely forgot" to pay for two boxes of cigars.

■ The wife of a retired rear admiral, asked by my reporter Mark McIntyre about pinching a 95-cent bottle of Vaseline Eye Drops, threatened: "If you want

to blow this up, you're going to get into a lot of trouble."

■ And when we tried to inquire about an Air Force colonel who walked out of the Bolling Air Force Base PX without paying for three fishing lures, we were told he wasn't available for comment because he was "out fishing."

Admiral Thomas Moore, the Joint Chiefs, chairman, was touring the links the other afternoon in a golf cart. He hauled along not only his clubs but an ominous black box that goes wherever Moore goes. The box contains a security phone which enables the chairman to talk with U. S. installations around the world. In the midst of his golf game, Moore placed an urgent call. But it wasn't to Saigon or some other trouble spot. He called his wife to tell her that he'd be home in 20 minutes.

Vice Admiral G. E. Miller, commander of the vaunted Sixth Fleet, is properly pampered by his executive officer. The solicitous exec, Cmdr. W. T. Crawford, issued a stern order aboard the admiral's flagship, the USS Springfield: "To avoid establishing a pattern of having emergency in-port drills at a set time, and further to avoid inconvenience to the Admiral, all emergency drills are to be held at random times after the Admiral and Chief of Staff have departed for the day." A Navy spokesman said the Admiral was unaware of the order and canceled it after we called.

The Defense Dept. publishes 366 different magazines and newspapers each year ostensibly to boost troop morale. In reality, however, the principle aim is to glorify the brass. In the first four issues of the new magazine *The Engineer*, for example, more than 40 pages are devoted to interviews or stories about the generals in the Army Corps of Engineers.

## from Camp News

### COOLING OFF THE BRASS

The following is part of a letter written to the BULKHEAD by an SOS brother aboard the USS Coral Sea.

"I've clipped a notice from the Plan of the Day. It went something like this: 'INCENSE Due to the fact that incense is used to cover up for marijuana and hashish, and because it's odor is offensive to many people incense will not be burned on the Coral Sea.' Personally, I find the odor of jet exhaust offensive!

"Did any of you hear about the death of Rear Admiral Robinson last month? He paid us (Coral Sea) a short, rather humorous visit. His body was brought to the Coral Sea where it was kept for about a day. They put him in our milk refer (refrigerator) right in the middle of the mess deck and put a Marine guard with a rifle outside the refer. Everybody was asking the Marine what he was doing and he'd say, 'I'm guarding the Admiral.' I thought it was a riot watching all the guys walk by with their breakfast trays looking at the refer.

"Hey man, what's going on?"  
"Oh, they took our milk out of the refer and put Rear Adm. Robinson in there.

Don't worry, though. He's being guarded; no one's gonna steal him."

"Good. I just hope we don't have Rear Admiral Soup or Navy Beans with Admiral bits for chow tonight."

"Me too. The meals have been bad enough as it is."

## Too Black GIs & Cops Clash

Stuttgart, Germany, Aug. 13 (UPI) — About 100 black United States soldiers clashed with dozens of West German police last night. The brawl started when police arrested a black soldier, civilian and military authorities said today.

A police spokesman said a squad car went to a local inn after a phone call: said that a black soldier had threatened a German civilian with a knife.

He said that after police arrested the soldier, crowds of other black soldiers stormed a local precinct station and temporarily freed the man.

A U.S. military spokesman said 13 soldiers were arrested and handed over to their units. He said nine German policemen and eight soldiers were treated for injuries. One soldier remained hospitalized.

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