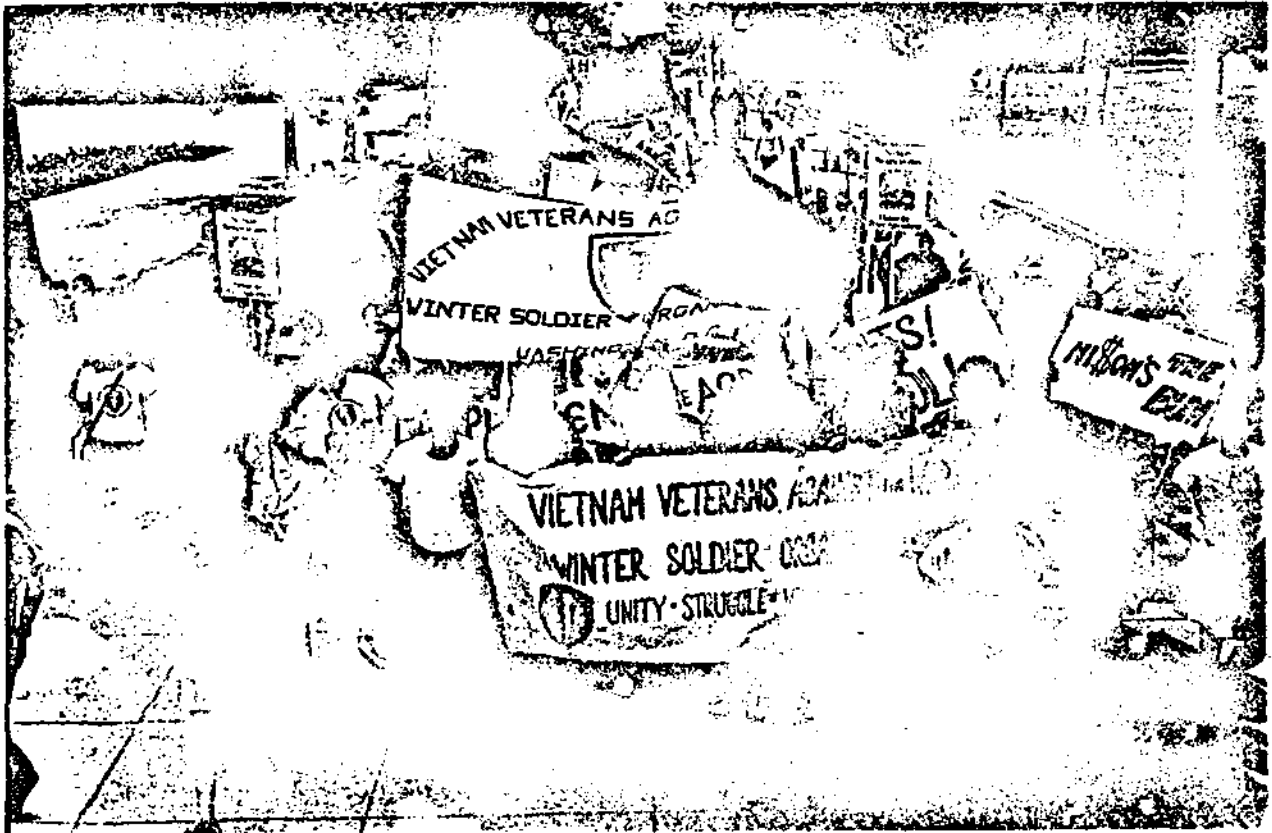


13TH

NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING



**VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR
WINTER SOLDIER ORGANIZATION**

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ENCLOSURE

NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
BUFFALO, NEW YORK
AUGUST 8 - 12, 1974

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IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL PROGRAM!

BUILD VVAW/WSO!

**NATIONAL STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
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AUGUST 8 - 12, 1974**

REGIONS PRESENT:

Washington/Alaska; California/Nevada; Colorado/Utah/Wyoming; Maryland/Virginia/Washington, D.C.; Florida/Georgia; E. Pennsylvania/Delaware/S. New Jersey; N. Illinois/Iowa; S. Illinois/E. Missouri/Oklahoma/Arkansas; Ohio/Indiana/Kentucky/Michigan/W. Pennsylvania/West Virginia; Great Plains; Wisconsin/Minnesota; New England; New York/N. New Jersey/Connecticut/Rhode Island. (Not all regions were present for the entire meeting, which accounts for differences in vote totals).

ROUND ROBINS, NATIONAL AND PROJECT REPORTS:

Round Robins from the regions, National Office reports and the majority of National Project reports were written prior to the meeting and handed out to those regions present. Because of the length of some of these reports and because a majority of regions already have copies of these reports, they will not be included in the minutes. If regions who were unable to attend the NSCM would like copies of the Round Robins or Project reports, they can be obtained either from the National Office or from the various regions. A report on Operation County Fair was not prepared, so we will try to get the current status report out in a future newsletter. Following is a summation of the Lawton/Gardner trial report which is being printed because a written report was not handed out at the meeting.

LAWTON/GARDNER TRIAL:

The trial of Gary Lawton and Zurebu Gardner has again been postponed and is now tentatively scheduled to begin on September 24th. This continuing series of postponements is attributed to the prosecution and may be seen as blatant harassment of the defense. The Riverside Political Prisoners Defense Committee has asked that people around the country try to mobilize people around this trial date. It is important to let the "powers that be" in Riverside know that Gary and Zurebu are not being tried in isolation. It is our responsibility to let the government know that there is national support for these brothers. Suggestions for work around the trial include demonstrations or actions for September 24th, petitioning campaigns demanding that the charges be dropped, and the continuation of the telegram/letter-writing campaign (the addresses that people should write to are listed in National Newsletter #26). The RPPDC also stressed that when doing propaganda work around the Lawton/Gardner trial, we should center on the racism and political repression involved in this case, and avoid expressing our "moral outrage" and discussing the Constitutionality of this third trial. In other words, we should approach this trial with strong, anti-imperialist politics and discuss the real issues involved.

Aside from the mass work we need to do around the trial, the RPPDC is also in need of defense workers. The coordinator of the RPPDC, who has worked on the defense of Gary and Zurebu throughout the two previous trials, is leaving Riverside to

resume his schooling and his absence will be seriously felt. The RPPDC will be short-handed, so they are asking for good, solid people to move to Riverside and help fill this void. People willing to work on the RPPDC will have to support themselves, meaning that there are no "free rides" available. People interested in working on Gary and Zurebu's trial should contact the RPPDC, P.O. Box 244, Riverside, CA 92502.

* * * * *

OLD BUSINESS

ELECTION OF NATIONAL COORDINATORS:

The terms of national coordinators Rich Bangert and Brian Adams expired at this NSCM. Of the people nominated at the last NSCM, Brian Adams was the only nominee who accepted nomination to the National Office. A vote on Brian's re-election was taken and he was elected with a vote of: 52.75-yes; 1.25-no; 6-abs.

INTERNAL FUNDING PROPOSAL:

At the April NSCM, the following proposal was made and discussed in the regions and voted on at this NSCM.

PROPOSAL: That membership in this organization requires a \$1.00 per month fee. This money would be collected by the regional and chapter offices in their respective areas of responsibility and forwarded to the National Office for use in the support of the National Office and the printing of Winter Soldier. Prisoners are to be exempt from this requirement.

VOTE: This proposal passed with a vote of: 52.5-yes; 2.5-no; 5-abs. The mechanism for collecting this money is to be left to the individual regions.

OBJECTIVES:

As decided at the last NSCM, proposals for new objectives were voted on during Old Business. A vote of yes or no was taken on each objective proposal and those objectives which received a 2/3 majority are now in effect as our organizational objectives. Those which did not receive a 2/3 majority were taken back to the Objectives Workshop, and all new objective proposals are contained in that workshop report. Following are those objectives which received a 2/3 majority; those objectives which failed are not printed here (see Milwaukee NSCM minutes for the text of the proposals which failed). Also, objectives #4 and #9 had revisions made in the Objectives Workshop and because of the minor nature of the revisions, they were accepted at this meeting and go into effect along with those objectives which received a 2/3 majority vote under Old Business. Below are the finalized forms of all the new objectives, and a reflection of the votes of those objective proposals which failed.

PREAMBLE: None of the preamble proposals received a 2/3 majority vote. The vote was: Majority Preamble -- 11.9; Minority Preamble -- 9.34; Minority proposal for No Preamble -- 23.76; 15-abs.

OBJECTIVE #1: To struggle for an immediate cessation of fighting and the withdrawal of all American troops, advisors, planes, and military and economic aid from Southeast Asia. We support as a basis for the cessation of these hostilities the various peace proposals of the people of Southeast Asia based upon their right of self-determination and actual control of their own destinies.

VOTE: This objective was accepted with a vote of: 45-yes; 15-abs.

OBJECTIVE #2: To struggle for the immediate termination of all other operations by the United States government, its agencies, and American business interests that are designed to suppress the rightful struggles for liberation and self-determination of the people of the world. This includes the creation and maintenance of dictatorial governments, economic domination and the theft of the natural resources of this and other countries.

VOTE: This objective was accepted with a vote of: 45-yes; 15-abs.

OBJECTIVE #3: To struggle for the goal that all military people (Active-duty, Reserve and National Guard) be afforded their constitutional rights which are denied by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. We condemn the use of the National Guard, Reserves and Active-duty personnel as strikebreakers, and we support the efforts of servicepeople in the struggles against military repression. We oppose the use of the military as an oppressive and policy-making force domestically and overseas.

VOTE: This objective was accepted with a vote of: 45-yes; 15-abs.

OBJECTIVE #4: To struggle for universal unconditional amnesty. This will include a single-type retroactive discharge for all vets, and amnesty for all persons in prison, underground, or in exile as a result of their resistance to the imperialist war machine as well as the clearing of all their resulting civil and criminal records.

VOTE: This objective was accepted with a vote of: 34.5-yes; 15.5-no; 10-abs. when voted on under Old Business. When the revision in the word structure was made in the Objectives Workshop, the body unanimously accepted the revised objective. The other proposal for the amnesty/veterans objective (also objective #4 proposal) failed with a vote of: 13.5-yes; 36.5-no; 10-abs.

OBJECTIVE #5: To struggle for decent benefits, full medical care (including the recognition of Post Vietnam Syndrome as a service-connected disability), and productive employment for all veterans with parity for all war resisters. We demand an end to discriminatory corporate hiring practices based on Vietnam-era service or Special Processing Numbers or descriptions, and the exploitation of veterans as a tool to divide the working class.

VOTE: This objective was accepted with a vote of: 32.3-yes; 12.7-no; 15-abs. (Because this objective was accepted, the other proposal for the veterans objective was not voted on).

OBJECTIVE #6: To struggle against racism which is historically used as a tool of U. S. imperialism to prevent and destroy unity among the people and justify the oppression and exploitation of third world people at home and abroad. We must fight this dehumanizing tactic which divides us, and strive to build unity between all people.

VOTE: This objective was accepted with a vote of: 43.5-yes; 1-no; 15.5-abs.

OBJECTIVE #7: Neither of the proposed objectives on sexism received a 2/3 majority, so at this time, the old sexism objective is still in effect. A proposal for a new sexism objective is included in the Objectives Workshop Report. The votes on this objective were: Majority proposal: 19.5-yes; 30.5-no; 10-abs. Minority proposal: 11.6-yes; 38-no; 10.4-abs.

OBJECTIVE #8: To struggle for the right of all workers to organize and strike to protect their income and safeguard their employment. We support progressive struggles aimed at improving working conditions.

VOTE: This objective was accepted with a vote of: 35.2-yes; 14.8-no; 10-abs. (Because this objective was accepted, the minority proposal for the workers objective was not voted on).

OBJECTIVE #9: To struggle against the use of the criminal justice system (police, courts, prisons, grand juries) as a tool of political repression, recognizing that this system now serves the interests of the rich and powerful while suppressing the majority of poor and working people. We will fight for the freeing of all political prisoners.

VOTE: This objective was accepted with a vote of: 45-yes; 15-abs. when voted on under Old Business. When the words "grand juries" were added in the Objectives Workshop, the body unanimously accepted the above as the revised objective.

OBJECTIVE #10: To dedicate ourselves to these principles and objectives which directly relate to the imperialist suppression of the People of the World by the United States government. We understand this war is imperialist in origin and affirm that the membership of VVAW/WSO is not only concerned with ending this war, but with changing the domestic, social, political and economic institutions that have caused and perpetuated its continuance.

VOTE: Since we have no preamble to the objectives, the Objectives Workshop felt that the old Objective #10 should remain. This proposal to keep objective #10 received unanimous acceptance by the body (see Objectives Workshop Report).

SUPPORT FOR CAIRO AS A NATIONAL PROJECT:

At the last NSCM, it was decided that we should examine our involvement with and support of the struggle of the people of Cairo, Illinois as one of our National Projects. The St. Louis chapter was to investigate the situation in Cairo and they pre-

sented their analysis at this NSCM with the recommendation that Cairo be dropped as a National Project. (Copies of the St. Louis report can be obtained through the National Office). In light of the new information we received regarding Cairo, the following proposal was made:

PROPOSAL: That Cairo be dropped as a National Project.

VOTE: This proposal passed with a vote of: 55-yes; 5-abs. Cairo was also discussed in the National Projects Workshop and an analysis of our involvement in Cairo is included in the workshop report. The National Office will write a letter to the Cairo United Front informing them of this decision, and a copy of that letter will be printed in the National Newsletter.

ROUND ROBIN ON NATURE & FUTURE OF VVAW/WSO:

From the very beginning of the meeting, it became clear that the major question of this NSCM centered around the nature and future of VVAW/WSO. In order to get an idea of what all the regions felt on this question and their responses to the National Office's Position Paper, time was set aside at the completion of Old Business for discussion of this question. This was done so that we could get an understanding of the regions' positions prior to the workshop discussions and so that a direction for the meeting could be provided. Each region was given approximately 10 minutes to present their ideas on the nature of VVAW/WSO. This was done in the form of a "Round Robin" and regions were allowed to split up their time so that a variety of opinions from a region could be presented. Though a more detailed discussion of this question went on in the Mass Organizations Workshop, most people felt that this setting aside of time at the beginning of the meeting was a good thing because it provided the means by which the various positions could become known to the entire body. Thus, the lines on this particular question were sharpened at the out-set of the meeting, and provided us with a better understanding of how to proceed in struggling around this question.

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WORKSHOP REPORTS

WINTER SOLDIER WORKSHOP

Criticism of the comment on the SLA by the National Office:

- 1) This comment incorrectly said "VVAW/WSO" when it should have said "National Office."
- 2) This comment should have criticized terrorism as a strategy as opposed to a tactic.

Statement on the Editorial which appeared in the August issue on the Vets' Movement:

The workshop as a whole, felt that the editorial correctly stated VVAW/WSO's position on AVM and the veterans movement. The workshop also felt that the slogan "Build the Anti-Imperialist Veterans Movement" correctly

states VVAW/WSO's position on what a veterans movement must be.

Some people in the workshop held the opinion that the National Collective used poor judgment in using that slogan at this time in the context of the internal struggle in VVAW/WSO.

The workshop also discussed whether it was correct to print letters in Winter Soldier like the letter received from Gary Lawton to Angela Davis. The workshop agreed that it was correct for this to be done.

VOTE: This workshop report received unanimous acceptance.

NATIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

It was decided at the last NSCM that another weekend workshop would be held in St. Louis in early June to further compile our National Defense Committee packet. This meeting in St. Louis was a success and several people and regions were assigned the responsibility of having papers written to be discussed at the NDC Workshop at this NSCM. Since the large majority of these papers were not completed and could not be discussed at this NDC Workshop, the workshop decided that another weekend workshop will be held on November 2-3 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The workshop also recommended that people who attend this weekend workshop should have specific skills or expertise in the defense area, or should be those people who have been involved in this process of developing the NDC packet. This is not an open meeting, and if regions have no involvement in getting the packet put out, they need not worry about getting representatives to the NDC workshop in Milwaukee. It is imperative, however, that those individuals and regions responsible for getting papers completed, have them prepared prior to this November meeting. Further information on this weekend workshop will be printed in the National Newsletter.

VOTE: This workshop report received unanimous acceptance.

MASS ORGANIZATIONS/NATURE OF VVAW/WSO WORKSHOP

The Mass Organizations/Nature of VVAW/WSO Workshop centered around the 2-line struggle within our organization and the focus of our work. Everyone in the workshop agreed that VVAW/WSO has a veterans and G.I. base, so the struggle came in when deciding what the focus of VVAW/WSO should be. The agreed upon definitions of the two lines were: 1) The majority position which sees VVAW/WSO as a mass, anti-imperialist organization with a veterans and G.I. base and focus; and 2) The minority position which sees VVAW/WSO as a mass, anti-imperialist organization with a veterans and G.I. base and an anti-imperialist focus. The workshop presented both a majority and a minority report on the question of our focus, and the following proposal was made.

PROPOSAL: To send both the majority and minority reports back to the regions and that a consensus vote of the delegates on each report accompany the reports and be reflected in the minutes.

VOTE: This proposal was accepted and following are the two workshop reports and the consensus vote which reflects how the delegates viewed the question of focus presented in these reports. It was also noted that both of these workshop reports reflect upon the Position Paper sent out by the National Office, so this Position Paper should also be studied by chapters and regions. The results of studying these reports will be discussed in the Mass Organizations Workshop at the next NSCM.

MAJORITY REPORT:

The majority report of the Mass Organizations sees the nature of and future of VVAW/WSO as a mass anti-imperialist organization with a veterans and G.I. base and focus.

All members of the workshop agreed with everything in the definition except the focus. Many of the reasons for a vets and G.I. focus are laid out in the National Office position paper and are not repeated here. In fact, this position is the present practice of most chapters in VVAW/WSO.

There are three major arguments against this line. First, it would limit our growth and thus decrease our effectiveness as an organization and as a part of the anti-imperialist movement. There are, however, 8.2 million Vietnam-era vets, plus a military full of G.I.s (and potential vets). And we are fully capable -- with our structure, our politics, and our programs -- to recruit many of these vets and G.I.s into VVAW/WSO and the anti-imperialist movement. Moreover, we are not saying "limit" -- we are saying "focus."

The second major argument says that focus on G.I. and vets issues is reformist. Any demand less than smash imperialism can be put forth in a reformist way. The D.C. demo with its 5 demands was not a reformist action because the demands were put forward in an anti-imperialist context. And out of this approach grew the militance and unity of that demonstration; militance and unity for VVAW/WSO can and should come from the same focus.

Third, this position does not limit our work to vets and G.I. issues -- we must actively support those struggles nationally and locally which push the anti-imperialist movement forward. If there is an over-whelming need to organize a defense committee in the community, for instance, and there is no one else to do it, VVAW/WSO can take on that job. But we have to remember that the best way to help Ruchell Magee, or the Vietnamese, or the Attica Brothers is through a strong, fighting organization which can support their struggles by attacking imperialism. One of the best things VVAW/WSO did yet in support of Gary Lawton was the D.C. demo.

An anti-imperialist focus as presented in the minority report leads to chapters working on whatever project in their community seems to be the best way to draw in people. It works from anti-imperialism in the sky to an anti-imperialist organization searching for a cause to take up. It leads to diffusion as a national organization and the resulting lack of effectiveness. We felt that a good analogy which illustrates this concept is like building a house from the attic down.

VOTE: The consensus vote on this report was: 43 in favor; 18.5 opposed; 3.5 - abs.

MINORITY REPORT:

We are a Mass Organization with a veterans and G.I. base and an anti-imperialist focus.

We feel that to identify VVAW/WSO as having an anti-imperialist focus is to put politics in command. To view veterans and G.I.s as a "constituency group" and then to put forward a line that we should make this group our focus and to organize around the specific points of oppression of this group is incorrect and will lead to reformism.

1. It does not put politics in command to say that VVAW/WSO's focus is veterans and G.I.s and to then add that we're also anti-imperialist. This is based on a view of the world, as well as of VVAW/WSO, which analyzes that "nothing is happening" or that "There's no crises for us to react to." (In the extreme case of AVM, a "national veterans crises" was created). It ignores what is going on in the world today. How can a view which closes off the U.S. at its borders ever be considered proletarian internationalism. This is the reason that, in the majority position, Indochina is seen as either a secondary level of work or an issue we give support to, but do not organize around. This will always happen when the constituency defines the politics -- the labor movement, and especially the CIO, is an example. The historical development of VVAW/WSO and the growth of anti-imperialist consciousness within it stems directly from the fact that we attacked the war in Indochina and the imperialist military machine rather than our specific problems as a constituency group.

2. To view veterans and G.I.s as a constituency group is a mistake. The specific point of oppression of Vietnam-era veterans and G.I.s is participation in the imperialist war machine. What the majority position labels as the specific points of oppression are the effects of this participation. To focus on the effects rather than the actual point of oppression leads nowhere. The National Office position paper uses the farmworkers as an example to support its case for constituency organizing (p 15). The point of oppression for farmworkers is around their work and it is correct for them to organize on this basis. If the growers grant every demand of the UFW, that point of oppression would disappear (though others would continue to exist). The point of oppression for vets and G.I.s is participation in the military. If the VA granted every demand of veterans, the struggles around PVS and the choices of active-duty G.I.s would remain the same.

3. Every vet is also something else -- a man or a woman, working or unemployed, a student, white or third world. How do we select a constituency group? It is a good thing to organize vets and G.I.s, but to do so as a particular constituency group negates 1) the dual nature arising from their experience and 2) by the fact of this dual nature, their involvement in other struggles. The creation of an artificial group leads to reformist demands.

4. The focus on vets and G.I.s while welcoming full and equal membership by non-vets is only a more sophisticated version of the veterans' auxiliary. It is indeed saying that it is correct to focus on somebody else's struggle. The struggle of non-vets in this organization focuses on anti-imperialist work, which is women's work, as Vietnam is women's work. For non-vets to focus on vets and G.I.s is to deny that the struggle is the same anti-imperialist struggle and focus. In the NO position paper (pg 11), it states that the WSO concept "envisioned transforming VVAW into THE mass organization of the U.S." This is not true. The majority of the membership adopted this position to resolve the contradiction between vets and non-vets, particularly women, within the organization. To say that non-vets should find their appropriate organization is a cop-out.

5. The basis of the majority position is a mechanistic application of the concept of the United Front. It lacks an analysis of the material conditions in this country. The models put forth are of a United Front against an external force -- either fascism in Europe in the 1930's or imperialism in China and Vietnam. Our relationship to imperialism is qualitatively different. Imperialism defines our economic base as well as our political institutions and our culture and we need to take this into account in building and becoming a part of a United Front against imperialism. The focus on veterans and G.I.s as a constituency group does not do this. Nor does it offer any way for us to best use our experience to advance the anti-imperialist struggle. It is easier to organize people or groups around their own needs or oppression when there is no explicit demand to consider these needs in the context of other people's struggles. To do this, to fail to make anti-imperialism our focus, is to stand in opposition to the rising tide of anti-imperialist struggles in this country and throughout the world.

VOTE: The consensus vote on this report was: 18.3 in favor; 43 opposed; 3.7-abs.

PRISON PROJECT WORKSHOP

There were three regions represented in the workshop who are doing prison support work: Ohio, Great Plains and California. Four regions who are interested in doing prison support work attended: New York, Northern Illinois/Iowa, East Pennsylvania/Delaware/S. New Jersey, and S. Illinois/E. Missouri.

It was made clear at the onset that we realize that we cannot organize a prison movement, but that we can support prisoners by sending/giving them guidance in their political education and by sharing our knowledge both inside and outside, of organizing and leadership skills. We learned from one of the people in the National Prison Project that the involvement of VVAW/WSO in prison work began/begins with initial contacts from veterans who are inside the prison and who are interested in forming chapters and want information on VA bennies, etc.

With political input and output, they are learning that the veterans' struggle inside the joint ties their struggle and organizing against their major oppressor, the system of imperialism. The consensus of this workshop is that what is needed is a national anti-imperialist prison organization.

This analysis -- that a national anti-imperialist prison organization is needed -- comes from our concrete practice. We have learned that we simply do not, on a national scale, have the time, energy, people power, or expertise to do more than support. We cannot provide legal help, publicity, funding, or any of the many other necessities that are needed in doing organizing. We see political support as our role and understand that, as the anti-imperialist politics of prisoners grows, they will be more oppressed and we will have to support their struggles. Nevertheless, they are the only ones who do the prison organizing inside. Our task is to educate the masses around prisons and the prison movement and is to organize support. Whenever we can lend political support we should. Outside support is vital to the prison movement and must expose the system.

We take our political analysis to the people inside and learn from them so we can take their analysis and use it to accurately educate the people outside.

At the last NSCM, a booklet was to have been prepared to be used as PE for

for both inside and outside prisons. "What Is VVAW/WSO" has been sent to all prison contacts. Our consensus was that chapters doing prisoner support work would send the project office any other ideas, helpful hints, etc. around this work. The objective conditions are so unique in prisons around the country that one pamphlet would not be applicable to them all, except in an extremely general way.

Other ideas for prison work include 1) the use of DUP as a strategem to get inside initially and to use it as PE about imperialism. We cannot mislead prisoners about the reality of the DU system (e. g. if a person got a BCD and is serving a 400 year rap for murder, that person's discharge is not going to get upgraded). The National Prison Project reported that they've gotten requests for information from prisoners about SPN's and that this has led into an increasing political awareness of the military and anti-imperialist movement. It was also suggested that letter-writing -- the establishment of communications -- is a key factor in solidifying political information about our common struggle both inside and out. 2) Use federal and state Bureau of Prisons literature and compare this with what we know our brothers and sisters are really going through and dealing with inside. This exposes the prison system as a tool of imperialism and we can use this to politically educate the people outside. The final suggestion was 3) if people inside put out a newsletter, or if the warden or other honchos put one out, try to get on the mailing list or get copies.

It was decided that VVAW/WSO's newsletter for prisoners, "Inside/Out," be sent to all chapters. This can be an incentive to do prison support work.

After our extensive political discussions on behavior modification, our consensus was that this is a topic in itself, and that more extensive investigation be done on behavior modification by those doing prison support work.

PROPOSAL: That we accept the workshop report and the minutes reflect the political struggle that went on during the plenary session concerning the nature of our prison work.

VOTE: This workshop report and the above proposal received unanimous acceptance and following is a summation of some of the questions which arose around our prison work. These questions are to be discussed in the regions and will be taken up at the Prison Workshop at the next NSCM. Also, the National Project Office will be discussing questions like these in future prison newsletters, which will be sent to all regions and chapters.

The workshop report states that "we cannot organize a prison movement but that we can support prisoners..." It further states that "we simply do not, on a national level, have the time, energy, people power, or expertise to do more than support." While this is true, if we apply it to ourselves now -- the prison support work that we are doing is in fact organizing prisoners so that they can organize themselves. If they then organize themselves in the context of our organization now, the question arises as to whether or not we will in fact be creating an identifiable organization for prisoners to relate to. If this is true, then we as an organization will mean both VVAW/WSO on the outside of the walls, and on the inside of the walls; we will then be on the inside. Prisoners will then be part of us and we, as an organization, might

very well be establishing a base of prisoners in which a focus can be applied. Understanding the prison movement should be separate from this organization, the question as to how one would stop the movement from relating to us in that context arises. If all of our correspondence fails to generate a separate movement (in the organizational sense), and the prisoners start relating to VVAW/WSO with a focus on their point of oppression (prisons) -- what then? As stated earlier, questions like this will have to be discussed in the regions and at the next NSCM Prison Workshop.

INDOCHINA WORKSHOP

The members of the Indochina workshop agreed that emphasis, by VVAW/WSO, on the continuing war in Indochina has increased since the Milwaukee NSCM. This is evidenced by the "Implement the Agreement -- End All Aid to Thieu and Lon Nol" demand that was put forth in Washington and also used for local build-up for the demonstration.

Therefore, the workshop endorses the National Office position for a national program as stated in the National Office report. We concur with tying this demand with the other three anti-imperialist demands on the dates mentioned, with the understanding that consistent day-to-day work linking together all four demands must be done. However, particular emphasis on the "Implement the Agreement" demand should be made on the January 27th action. We suggest that the national office, if financially prepared at the time, prepare a poster for local build-up of this action.

The workshop also suggests local support, wherever possible, with Indochina Peace Campaign and Indochina Solidarity Committee's International Week of Concern, September 29 - October 6. The demands as called for by the above mentioned organizations are amnesty for all war resisters and Implement the Peace Agreements. In support of this action, the workshop suggests local organizational literature/leaflets with an anti-imperialist basis be used. (More information concerning this will appear in the National Newsletter).

The need for continued internal and external education on the nature of the continued war was also discussed and supported. It was again suggested that people who would like to keep up on the current activities in Indochina subscribe to a publication of: Indochina Resource Center, 1322 18th St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036. Also, literature is available from IPC and ISC.

VOTE: This workshop report received unanimous acceptance. It was also noted that what we are actually endorsing with regard to the Week of Concern are the dates of that week, and not necessarily IPC's planned actions. The dates of Sept 29 - Oct. 6 have been put forward by the Vietnamese people and international events will occur during this week.

OBJECTIVES WORKSHOP

The objectives workshop presented six proposals and one additional point which is not to be taken back to the regions. One of the proposals from this workshop includes a minority report. Following are these proposals, etc. and the votes on each of them.

#1: The workshop discussed the proposed objective on homosexual people which was introduced by the New York City chapter. The vote of the workshop on this proposed objective was: 4-yes; 18-no. The people who voted for the objective decided not to present a minority report on this objective, so this proposed objective is not under consideration.

#2: PROPOSAL: The Objectives Workshop proposed that VVAW/WSO not have any objective on the oppression of homosexual people.

VOTE: This proposal received a consensus vote of: 48.3-yes; 16.7-no. Since this is a policy decision, this proposal will have to be voted on under Old Business at the next NSCM and is to be discussed in the regions in the interim.

#2: MINORITY REPORT: VVAW/WSO as an anti-imperialist organization has to focus on the people oppressed by Imperialism to support the struggle against Imperialism. We feel that gay people are among those who are directly oppressed by the system. This materializes in that they are systematically denied their civil rights, are subject to criminal prosecution and are forced to lead hidden and fearful lives. This is a tool used by Imperialism to prevent and destroy unity among the people. Thusly, we feel this necessitates the drafting of a principle of unity or an objective around the struggle of gay people.

PROPOSAL: That this minority report go back to the regions for discussion,

VOTE: 49.25-yes; 15.75-no. This vote means that this minority report is to be discussed in the regions in light of having to vote on the Majority Proposal #2 of the objectives workshop under Old Business at the next NSCM. The minority report is not an objective to be voted on, but a point of discussion.

#3: PROPOSED OBJECTIVE ON THE OPPRESSION OF WOMEN (Objective #7): Because the proposed objective on sexism did not receive a 2/3 majority when voted on under Old Business, the workshop proposed the following objective on the oppression of women:

PROPOSAL: To struggle against sexism which is historically used as a tool of U. S. imperialism to prevent and destroy unity among the people and justify the oppression and exploitation of women. We must fight this dehumanizing tactic which divides us and strive to build unity between all people.

VOTE: The body unanimously accepted this proposed objective. This proposal should be discussed in the regions and will be voted on under Old Business at the next NSCM. At that time, this proposed objective will require a 2/3 majority vote in order for it to become our objective on sexism.

#4: PROPOSAL: That old objective #10 be included as is in the objectives of VVAW/WSO.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance and objective #10 is now one of our objectives.

#5: PROPOSAL: That there be no Preamble to the objectives of VVAW/WSO.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance.

#6: PROPOSAL: That we add "grand juries" to the listing of examples of the criminal justice system in Objective #9.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance and is to go into effect immediately as a revision of Objective #9.

#7: PROPOSAL FOR MINOR WORD CHANGE FOR AMNESTY OBJECTIVE:

PROPOSAL: To struggle for universal unconditional amnesty. This will include a single-type retroactive discharge for all vets, and amnesty for all persons in prison, underground, or in exile as a result of their resistance to the imperialist war machine as well as the clearing of all their resulting civil and criminal records.

VOTE: This proposed structural change received unanimous acceptance and is to go into effect immediately.

The workshop proposed that Items 4, 5, 6, and 7 be implemented at this meeting and that Items 1, 2, and 3 be taken to the regions for further discussion. (This workshop suggestion was unanimously accepted by the body meaning that Items 4, 5, 6 and 7 are now in effect, whereas proposals #2 and #3 will be voted on under Old Business at the next NSCM.

Also during the Objectives Workshop, the N. Illinois/Iowa region introduced the idea that instead of having Objectives, we develop a Principle of Unity and Statement of Principles. Following is an example of what this idea would be like, and it should be used as a basis for discussion of the concept of the Principle of Unity. Also, the N. Illinois/Iowa region will send out a detailed report to all regions on why they see this as necessary prior to the next NSCM. This report will also include an example formulation of the principle of unity and an example of what the Statement of Principles would be like. When discussing this concept, people should not struggle around the wording but around the idea. Below is the initial model of the concept that N. Illinois/Iowa is putting forward for discussion. It should also be noted that the content of this example is used as an example and does not necessarily reflect the feelings of the National Steering Committee.

FORMAT FOR POLITICAL STATEMENTS OF VVAW/WSO

PRINCIPLE OF UNITY

We are opposed to the system of Imperialism and its oppression of peoples and national liberation struggles at home and abroad.

DEFINITION OF VVAWWSO

We are a mass, anti-imperialist organization with a veterans and active-duty people base and focus.

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

This should be an elaboration of the principle of unity and definition of VVAW/WSO. It should contain a further explanation of Imperialism and sections on its manifestations, such as racism and sexism. This is also where we should explain the relationship of other struggles, for example strikes, UFW, U.S. aggression in South-east Asia, etc. to our own struggles. We suggest a form similar to the pamphlet, "What Is VVAW/WSO."

VOTE: The idea of taking this format back to the regions for discussion was accepted by a majority vote. As stated earlier, the N. Illinois/Iowa region will be sending out a more detailed discussion of what they are proposing, but the above is to be used as a basic guideline for discussion of this concept.

AMNESTY/DUP WORKSHOP

This workshop report was presented and discussed in three sections. Also, it was decided to discuss the National Program which was put forward in the National Office Report and include this Program with this Workshop report. Because of the many things that were discussed in this workshop presentation, the report will be presented here by the three sections and the votes on these sections. Also, the National Program will be discussed following Section 3 of this report.

Section I: A round-robin report on amnesty and discharge upgrading began the workshop with each region participating relating their practice with them during the past 7 months. In sum, we agreed that our amnesty campaign had been very successful and should be pushed forward. Most of the reports, however, dealt with experience and problems stemming from DUP work. In some cases, the DUP's being discussed by regions were not in fact VVAW/WSO programs at all -- they went under other names and were in fact other organizations. In other instances (Colorado), DUP work was found by the workshop to be compromised in a lot of ways by the coalitional nature of the DUP's in the area. The basic thread running consistently through the discussion of DUP work however was the minimum of success the DUP work had had in 1) building the amnesty and single-type discharge campaigns and 2) recruiting new members to VVAW/WSO and the anti-imperialist struggle. The workshop analyzed the failure of DUP to achieve these goals as due to the following reasons:

1. People have been, consistently, losing sight of the political nature of discharge upgrading work. The tactic of preparing and filing discharge upgrading briefs for bad paper vets in many cases became the goal of DUP's in and of themselves. Instead of concentrating on organizing badly discharged vets into the street to fight for, and in, the campaign for UUA and a single-type discharge, DUP's have been organizing paperwork into Washington. The primary aspect of DUP work is mass outreach and building the people's movement to fight for UUA and a single-type discharge. We know we cannot depend on the DUP boards; or on the imperialist system. We can and must depend on the people. We cannot view DUP's as "service

projects." They must be seen as a tactic in the overall campaign to fight for UUA and a single-type discharge.

2. Another major failure of DUP's was not providing immediate and concrete activities for bad paper vets at the very beginning of the counseling process. This failure was again, a direct result of relying not on our primary strength, the people, but on the system. As soon as a vet contacts the DUP, an explanation should be made that the rate of upgrading is about 80% against him -- it should be explained that the people reviewing an upgrading appeal will be the same class of people that gave out the bad discharge in the first place. That even with an upgraded discharge he's going to get lousy benefits and a lousy job.

However, we cannot merely lay out an analysis of the discharge classification system, the upgrading system and imperialism and expect bad paper vets to then directly involve themselves in the anti-imperialist struggle. This will not happen on a regular basis unless there is a ready link-up made between the day-to-day needs of the vet as a result of bad papers and a concrete program to fight for these needs. With most bad paper vets it is a fight for a decent job, for benefits and services. Chapters with DUP's must have programs in operation that will enable bad paper vets to immediately and personally get involved in actions directly relevant to their lives: demanding decent jobs, VA benefits and services, etc. The point is to immediately place them actively in this struggle, not to allow them to passively sit out the appeal process as a bystander.

3. It became evident that many DUP's are drowning in paperwork supposedly seen as necessary to prepare a brief for submission to the DUP's boards. This reveals: a) an attitude of relying on the system rather than the people (as explained in point #1). We should know that the system cannot and will not meet our demands. b) Terry Selzer of Washington, D. C. VVAW/WSO revealed that there was a great misunderstanding about the amount of paperwork really necessary for filing with the boards. The point is that we do not actually have to write the briefs at all. All that is necessary is a chronology, the vet's 201 file and a few government forms. Terry will be supplying all the regions doing DUP work with the specific technical information necessary for this filing in the immediate future.

4. We decided that the tactic of flooding the discharge upgrading boards was politically incorrect. It was like asking for a free trial or demanding the "guarantees" we supposedly have under the constitution. It is a repeat of the same error of primarily concerning ourselves with the system rather than the people. We are striving to fill the streets with people fighting for UUA and a single-type discharge and not filling the DUP boards with paperwork asking for it.

5. The ACLU's LMDC will not be providing VVAW/WSO DUP's with legal representation in the future. We hope to attain National Lawyers Guild assistance and rely on our own resources to meet this tactical need.

VOTE: This portion of the Amnesty/DUP report received unanimous acceptance.

Section II: RE. Amnesty work in particular --

1. It was felt necessary that the amnesty pamphlet's section on "background" needed to be rewritten before the next printing of it. It places too much emphasis on so-called constitutional rights rather than bringing up the correct reason for the need for UUA: based on an analysis of imperialism.

It was felt that a more concerted effort was needed to link up other amnesty constituencies, such as families of resisters, those in prison, etc.

VOTE: This portion of the Amnesty/DUP report received unanimous acceptance.

Section III: The Amnesty/DUP workshop reached the following conclusions:

1. That we endorse the National Office Report to the Buffalo NSCM on amnesty and DUP.
2. That the amnesty/DUP campaign remain a part of the overall program of VVAW/WSO for the coming months as outlined in the National Office Report to the Buffalo NSCM on our Program.
3. That we should continue discharge upgrading work. However, we reiterate that we will focus our work on the political aspects of DUP's as part of, or one tactic of, the general campaign for UUA and a single-type discharge. DUP's revolve around this struggle, not the other way around. We must understand the nature of DUP's -- what it can do as a tactical part of the UUA/single-type discharge campaigns, and what it cannot do as a strategy in and of itself.

VOTE: This portion of the Amnesty/DUP report was accepted by a majority vote.

During the discussion of Section III of the Amnesty/DUP workshop report, we discussed the National Program (a copy of this Program is included in the National Office Report). During the discussion of this Program, the following proposal was made:

PROPOSAL: That we accept the National Program (put forward in the National Office Report) as the program to guide our work for the next 9 months.

AMENDMENT: That we accept the strategy of focusing our demands around the V.A. as a concept to be applied on a national level by regions and chapters as dictated by their particular conditions.

VOTE: This proposed National Program and the above amendment were accepted with a vote of: 55.65-yes; 8.75-no; .6-abs. Thus, the ideas put forward in the National Program and the above amendment are to be guidelines for our daily work in the next 9 months.

The strategy of focusing our demands around the V.A. was introduced in a paper presented by the Wisconsin/Minnesota region. Since this paper is to be used as one strategy for focusing our National Program during the next several months (wherever applicable), the discussion paper concerning the V.A. is reprinted below.

DISCUSSION PAPER OF CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE V. A. :

From our experience in organizing for the July 1-4 demonstration and building our chapter, we think that VVAW/WSO should develop a campaign of "War on the VA" and that the "War on the VA" be adopted as a national campaign and be the main focus of the work of the organization as a whole for the next period.

This campaign is a concrete way for us to take up the mass demands of veterans at the same time as we attack an important imperialist institution, the VA. In launching an offensive against the VA, we will not only be defending the standard of living of an important segment of the working class, but also exposing and weakening the VA and the imperialist ideology which it and the right-wing "Veterans Organizations" it supports are pushing.

There are several reasons why "War on the VA" is the key campaign for VVAW/WSO to undertake at the present time. The economic and political crisis of U. S. Imperialism is growing daily, under pressure from the defeat in SE Asia, rising resistance of the world's peoples, and growing inter-imperialist competition. As a result, the ruling class has been forced more and more to increase economic attacks and political repression against the working people and oppressed nationalities at home. Veterans, once in the forefront of the struggle against the War they were forced to fight, now find themselves in the forefront in the fight against these attacks. Resistance to government harassment and cuts in the standard of living is now the main issue confronting veterans, and the main way this comes down in veterans as a group is the agency of the VA.

Declaring "War on the VA" does not mean separating vets off from the working class and other struggles, but rather opening up a new front in the fight against imperialism. Because vets, especially Third World vets, are hard hit by the crisis, and because of the special consciousness which comes from having been part of the imperialist military machine, vets' struggle against the VA and for their immediate interests can take on a militant and consciously anti-imperialist character that can be an inspiration to all the struggles which are presently on the rise. VVAW/WSO is the only organization which can lead veterans in this struggle; at the same time, it is only by becoming part of the real needs and struggles of the masses of vets that we as an organization can grow and advance.

The "War on the VA" is not a squabble over the distribution of a few crumbs. The VA has no interests in common with the masses of vets or the American people. It cannot "serve the people;" it is an imperialist institution. The harder we attack it, the broader we build our movement, the more we will help to expose the system as a whole. In participating in the "War on the VA" many vets will be able to understand on the basis of concrete experience how all our struggles are part of a single United Front Against Imperialism and why we must join with the working class and all oppressed people, including especially the liberation movements of the Third World, in our fight against the common enemy.

This is not to deny that with the "War on the VA" as with every other struggle of the people, a danger of reformism exists. AVM and similar organizations have provided a vivid illustration of how some forces within the veterans movement will try to confine the struggle to "bread and butter issues" and isolate vets from the rest of the working class and the world anti-imperialist movement. In carrying on "War against the VA," we will have to rely on the masses of veterans. We propose that as a guide in combatting reformism the campaign be built around the following "7 Point War Plan:"

Nationally, there is on-going work being done by different chapters around organizing the anti-imperialist veterans movement. What we need to develop is a national strategy to help and guide us in planning and moving our work in an anti-imperialist, not reformist, direction.

GUIDELINES:

1. Our struggle is revolutionary, not reformist.
2. The VA cannot be made to serve the needs of the people. We are organizing veterans, not the VA.
3. Use the campaign to bring in other anti-imperialist issues and to win people to these struggles.
4. Fight racial and national discrimination. Build a unified, multi-national campaign.
5. Keep demands winnable but don't confuse victory in one battle with winning the whole war.
6. Don't limit ourselves to what the VA says is within its powers to do.
7. We don't want any special privileges. We raise specific vets demands because they are in the interest of the working class and the anti-imperialist movement.

DEMANDS: Below is a list of suggested basic demands around the VA campaign:

1. No more red tape and harassment. End military type control over benefits. The red tape and hard time vets get at the VA is deliberately used to prevent vets from getting all we are due. We must demand immediate processing of all claims and appeals. -- Like the military, the VA makes its own laws and is answerable to no one. End all special adjudication and review boards. We demand the right to our own physician at all disability examinations and hearings, and the right to appeal all VA decisions through the courts.
2. Single-type discharge for all Vets. Full VA benefits for all Vets. -- Less-than-honorable discharges are used by the military to threaten and punish those who fight back against it, especially against Third World G.I.s. We demand one certificate of service, retroactively, for all vets, and an end to all SPN numbers and similar discriminatory characterizations. -- In the meantime, we demand that the VA grant full benefits to all veterans regardless of type of discharge.
3. Decent care and full staff at VA hospitals. Right to our choice of physician and medical services at government expense. -- VA hospitals are so bad that only vets who have no other choice (about 15% of them) will use the facilities. We demand full and decent medical care for all vets and dependents. Demilitarize the VA hospitals. No more using vets as guinea pigs for new drugs and procedures. Treat older vets under VA nursing care with respect and dignity. We support the struggles of hospital workers for better pay and working conditions. -- At the same time, we demand the right to treatment at a facility of our choice at government expense. This includes drug addiction and PVS. Right to treatment by our own physical at VA hospitals.
4. Education and job training for all vets. Raise and extend the GI Bill. -- The present GI Bill makes it nearly impossible for poor and working vets to go to school. We demand payment of tuition and all school-related expenses and a living allowance at federal minimum standards. No cut-off of the GI Bill for future vets. End all time limits on eligibility for educational benefits. Unlimited time for working vets to complete course of study.
5. No more racial and national discrimination. -- Like the military, every VA facility and program is permeated by racism. We will fight every particular instance of racial discrimination and denial of rights. We demand firing of all racist administrators and abolition of all discriminatory programs and practices.

Realistically speaking, our progress in developing anti-imperialist GI work has been slow and faltering. The GI workshop recognized our utter unpreparedness to lead forward the rising, spontaneous GI movement, and many people attributed this problem to the fact that we have neglected to focus in on anti-imperialist GI organizing. But we are determined to take on this struggle and ask that regions and chapters continue serious political evaluations of their strengths and weaknesses in GI work and submit any and all related ideas and needs to the National Collective in preparation for the GI Conference.

VOTE: This workshop report received unanimous acceptance. People who have ideas on developing a program for GI work should submit these ideas to the National Office as soon as possible.

INTERNAL ORGANIZING WORKSHOP

There was much discussion in this workshop around basic definitions; the following definitions were agreed on by the workshop to be taken back to the regions for guidelines for discussion.

1. A member is a person who works to the best of his or her capability for local, regional and national programs for the organization. The chapter must decide who is a member.
2. A chapter is a group of members who work collectively to the best of their capability for local, regional and national programs of the organization. The region must decide on who is a chapter.
3. A region is a group of chapters who work collectively to the best of their capabilities for the regional and national programs of the organization. The National Steering Committee must decide who is a region.

The workshop also feels that a definition of an organizing committee and organizing contact needs discussion. Further, the entire VVAW/WSO working paper, plus the added items which appear in minutes of meetings (such as the N.O. report definition of voting from the Milwaukee NSCM) should be discussed in chapters and regions. Regions should send results and input to the N.O. to be compiled by the 15th of October; N.O. should send the compilation of the results back to the regions by the end of October.

There was also agreement that emphasis on the need for political growth of members, chapters, and regions be made at all levels as part of our day to day work. Politics and practice are inseparable, and political growth, through study, struggle and day to day work around our organizational programs, therefore, involves an understanding of the politics of these programs. In short, the workshop agrees that political growth of each member must be emphasized in every aspect of our work as we struggle for political unity. In unity there is strength.

Discussion around challenging seating of regional delegations to the NSCM stressed that challenges be decided through struggle at the beginning of the meetings; though the mechanics for this now exist, they are not being used -- and they should be.

Chapters and regions should also discuss the question of representation. Specifically, the workshop raised the question of whether or not large and/or strong regions and small and/or weak regions should have equal votes at the NSCM. It was

6. No military recruiters at the VA. Kick out the American Legion, VFW, and other reactionary veterans organizations. -- The VA works to keep vets under the influence of the military and organizations pushing imperialist war. We demand an end to all special privileges of the AL, VFW, etc. such as certifying vets for welfare and other programs. Throw them out of VA premises.

7. We would like to have something on jobs but need to start from a specific tie-in with the VA. No info on this at present.

CONCLUSION

By unfolding the demands of universal unconditional amnesty and end all aid to Thieu and Lon Nol around the struggles for the day-to-day needs of veterans, it gives us a solid, concrete way to bring the spirit, militancy, and anti-imperialist consciousness of the July Demonstration in Washington back to the masses of vets in the community.

G. I. WORKSHOP

The workshop began with a round robin report about work being done around GIS within the regions present. Out of the 9 regions attending the workshop, 4 are presently engaged in active-duty organizing (Ohio, Washington state, Maryland, and California) and 5 have established contacts in various bases and intend to begin work (Wisconsin, St. Louis, E. Pennsylvania, Portsmouth, Chicago). Reports generally reflected a low level of actual GI organizing within VVAW/WSO, but everyone expressed earnest commitment to continuing and expanding active-duty work on a chapter and regional level.

There was general agreement that the low level of organizing could be traced to particular limitations of the National GI Project. As we see it, the NGIP has by its basically bureaucratic nature and concentration on localized communication, been unable to provide a clear political direction for anti-imperialist GI work for VVAW/WSO. This has hindered movement toward creating a unified national program for GI work. The workshop reached a unanimous consensus that the National Collective should provide this needed leadership and direction with the input of the National Steering Committee.

Our discussion of the nature of GI organizing in VVAW/WSO centered around the following points:

- 1) The military is the primary armed force used to maintain U. S. imperialism;
- 2) GI's are exploited inside the military to be used against their own people -- the working class;
- 3) We need to organize and educate people inside the military around both of these aspects. Not only should we be organizing and educating around the particular oppression of GIs (i. e. UCMJ harassment, living conditions, racism, etc), but we must also continually be developing a consciousness among GIs about their role within the U. S. military. As a primary tool of U. S. imperialism, the military should be ultimately turned back on its operators.

We felt that raising the single-type discharge demand was one good demand for GI's. A lack of time prohibited us from developing a broader program, and we will be looking for more direction from people with experience in GI organizing before and during the GI Conference.

pointed out that the only way to give full representation from all the chapters and contacts around the country is through a convention, an idea which should also be discussed in chapters and regions; the workshop agreed that such a move could not come in the immediate future.

The leadership crisis, indicated by the fact that only one person accepted nomination to the N.O. is lessening. It was emphasized that chapter activity, implementation of organizational programs, and political growth and unity is developing organizational strength at the mass level which, in turn, is developing leadership further. Several members of the workshop pointed out that the growth of communists in the organization was also contributing to the lessening of the crisis in leadership, at all levels of VVAW/WSO.

VOTE: This workshop report received unanimous acceptance. It is important to note that the above ideas are meant to serve only as guidelines for discussions in the regions. At the next NSCM, we should begin to formulate definitions, rules for representation, etc. Also, feed-back on the Working Paper is due to be sent to the N.O. no later than October 15th. (A copy of the Working Paper will be sent out to all chapters along with these minutes).

D. C. DEMONSTRATION ANALYSIS WORKSHOP

We first evaluated leadership of the demo. We saw the strengths being that the self-initiative by a number of people who took leadership roles at the demo shows the great potential for future leadership that VVAW/WSO has. We also believed that, in general, the leadership learned and progressed throughout the course of the demo. We saw the weaknesses of leadership as well. These were that the leadership tailed the masses and didn't lead, that the leadership was defeatist in attitude and held back the people because of lack of faith in the masses of people's ability to correctly assess situations. The same people tended to make all the decisions all the time. Leadership must be constantly developing and expanding, which was our fourth criticism. Finally, there was a lack of outreach and integration of community people and others who were drawn to the demo. We feel that leadership should have provided an overall plan for this kind of outreach, for without it we will not continue to grow.

We also criticized the overall failure to consistently link up the five demands at each action. We should have had banners/posters/signs about each one at every action and should have somehow linked them more strongly in each leaflet. We must educate the masses of people about the unity and interconnectedness of each demand. As there is a potential for reformist tendencies to emerge, rather than our anti-imperialist politics (i. e. the demo about single-type discharge at the Court of Military Appeals could have been in this vein), we must be continually aware of this and struggle to put forth our politics.

A major misconception at the demo was what we called the "Dewey Canyon III mentality." The age of John Kerry is over. We must realize that we are a fighting anti-imperialist organization and that the system is attempting to smash all parts of the anti-imperialist movement, including us. The assumptions many made -- that the police will never attack and that we are exempt from harassment because "we are

veterans" -- show that there was a misunderstanding of our current concrete level of struggle.

The buildup for the demo was seen as also helping to build the regions and was strongest when it was in the form of actions that took place on a consistent basis in the streets. We also felt that the buildup for the demonstration was unified for the first time.

We concluded that we need to go on from here and continue to build VVAW/WSO as a fighting anti-imperialist organization and that we need to bring that understanding back to our local communities.

VOTE: This workshop report was unanimously accepted. During the discussion of this report, two additions were made by the workshop: 1) The workshop accepts the report on the demo logistics which was contained in the N.O. Report, and 2) the workshop agreed that our action in D. C. was definitely a people's victory with a high degree of political struggle and unity.

NATIONAL PROJECTS/CP, USA WORKSHOP

(The workshop discussed three separate questions and they will be presented in these sections here).

An agenda was adopted and the following proposal was presented first.

PROPOSAL: That VVAW/WSO drop Operation County Fair as a National Project.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance and OCF is no longer one of our National Projects.

Discussion and struggle: A history of OCF was summarized for the workshop. It was agreed that discussion of the causes of OCF's failure was necessary. It was immediately clear that there was essential unity around the view that the original decision to undertake OCF was dictated by paternalism and racism and that the project was essentially reformist in nature. There was struggle around the relationship of the failure of the project to the focus of the organization and what that focus was.

Summary: That the project failed due to the paternalism and racism involved in adopting what was essentially a reformist project outside our defacto focus, which was anti-war and the liberalism involved in subsequently failing to deal with the main contradictions of our initial failure.

CAIRO: The workshop felt that the decision to support the struggle in Cairo was a good one and that it represented a successful illustration of the link of the anti-war movement to the repression that was going on inside the U. S. The decision to get involved in Cairo was different from OCF because we were not trying to organize the Black community and that we were invited by a strong community organization. Our mistake came when we dragged out the support far beyond the initial struggle which we were invited to support. We think that the organization failed to deal with the changed conditions in Cairo for the same reasons, including a paternal attitude towards Black people, stated concerning OCF. We do wish to commend the organi-

NEW BUSINESSANNEXATION OF NEW MEXICO/ARIZONA:

At the last NSCM, the region of New Mexico/Arizona was made an Organizing Contact because of the inactivity within the region. In light of the defunct status of the New Mexico/Arizona area, the following proposal was made:

PROPOSAL: That the area of New Mexico/Arizona be broken up and that the state of New Mexico be annexed to the Colorado/Utah/Wyoming region. The state of Arizona is to be annexed to the California/Nevada region.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance.

EXPULSION OF CARL BROWN AND ED COOPER:

Because of the potentially volatile situation in Tampa, Florida (see National Office Report -- Internal report) the following proposal was made:

PROPOSAL: That Carl Brown and Ed Cooper be expelled from VVAW/WSO. They are forbidden to use the name "VVAW/WSO," "VVAW," "WSO," or our organizational logo. At this time, there is no functioning VVAW/WSO chapter in the Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater area, nor has there been such a chapter in the recent past.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance and the expulsion went into effect at the close of the Buffalo NSCM.

NUMBER OF NSCM'S PER YEAR:

PROPOSAL: That VVAW/WSO hold National Steering Committee Meetings twice a year instead of three times a year, and that the appropriate administrative procedures dealing with election of national coordinators, etc. be developed.

VOTE: This is a policy decision, thus it will have to be discussed in the regions and voted on at the next NSCM. The vote for sending this proposal back to the regions for discussion received unanimous acceptance.

WORKSHOP ON MASS & CADRE ORGANIZATIONS PROPOSAL:

PROPOSAL: To hold a workshop at the next NSCM to explore the relations between mass and cadre organizations. This question is to be discussed in regions and chapters prior to the next meeting.

VOTE: This proposal failed when it did not receive a majority vote. The vote on this proposal was: 27.5-yes; 27.5-no; 5-abs. Though no workshop on this question is now scheduled, regions and chapters should discuss this question on a principled level and bring their ideas to the next NSCM.

zation for finally conducting a thorough investigation, through the St. Louis chapter, which was presented at this meeting. It was first felt that we ought to have supported Cairo as an action or series of actions rather than as a National Project.

In light of the above two discussion of OCF and our involvement in Cairo, the body felt that the analysis of why these projects failed was very important and it is necessary that we learn from the mistakes and successes of our work around these two National Projects. Since the analysis of these projects is incomplete in this workshop report, the following proposal was made:

PROPOSAL: That people involved with these National Projects should write an analysis of why the Projects failed and these analyses are to be put in the National Newsletter so that we may all better learn the lessons of our involvement with OCF and Cairo.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance.

CP, USA: There was considerable struggle over establishing the facts of CP, USA practice and the practice of the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression (here in referred to as "the Alliance") in regard to the cases of political repression we support, specifically the Leavenworth Brothers, Lawton-Gardner, and Ruchell Magee. Much struggle went on in the workshop. A point of unity which received workshop support by a 12 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 abstention, follows:

PROPOSAL: That VVAW/WSO use the various tools at its means (Winter Soldier, Newsletters, meetings, etc.) to expose the practice of various individuals and the organizations with regard to cases of political repression that we are working on. In the Winter Soldier this would be limited to letters from political prisoners and other interested parties (such as the Alliance, Angela Davis, etc).

VOTE: This proposal was passed with a vote of: 54.15-yes; 5.85-no.

VA/VETERANS WORKSHOP

The VA/Veterans workshop began with a Round Robin of the represented regions and discussion of what actions the various regions have been conducting around the VA. A brief discussion of the National Program and the suggested strategy for focusing this Program around the VA was also held (see Amnesty Workshop report for more details). The idea of holding a Winter Soldier Investigation on the VA and the problems of veterans was put forward and the following proposal was made:

PROPOSAL: That local chapters do actions on the weekend of Oct. 28. Winter Soldier Investigations on the problems of veterans are suggested as one tactic to be used on this weekend as the beginning of a much larger campaign.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance. It should be noted that this proposal was put forward as a suggestion for a way to implement our National Program and focusing our demands.

who are able to attend are encouraged to do so. Because this rally will be a major political event and because VVAW/WSO was asked for national endorsement, the following proposal was made:

PROPOSAL: That VVAW/WSO endorse and support Puerto Rican Independence Day. Regions and chapters are encouraged to support this action.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance.

ATTICA MEMORIAL WEEK:

September 13th is the three-year anniversary of the Attica rebellion and subsequent massacre. Because of this, there will be a national demonstration in Buffalo, New York on September 14th. Regions and chapters are encouraged to attend this action, and logistics for VVAW/WSO members will be handled by the Buffalo chapter. Those planning to attend this demonstration should contact the Buffalo people as soon as possible. Because of the importance of this demonstration, the following proposal was introduced:

PROPOSAL: That VVAW/WSO, as a national organization, support the national demonstration planned for September 14th in Buffalo. This action is being called in memory of the Attica massacre.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance.

PROPOSAL ON PVS CLEARINGHOUSE:

PROPOSAL: This proposal concerns the future of the PVS Clearinghouse. We believe that our work around PVS should be integrated into the campaign against the VA. We believe that PVS is important to bring forward in the campaign against the VA because it does bring up certain important lessons in terms of the imperialist nature of the war in Indochina, plus it is an important issue facing many veterans.

As for the future of the Clearinghouse, we believe it should be dropped as such because there aren't the resources and political input from VVAW/WSO as a whole to make the Clearinghouse really work. This is because people believe that the only way to bring out the question of PVS is through work around the VA. In isolation from this focus, the work hasn't received much support from people in Milwaukee and thus, the project is done primarily by one person. Integrating the PVS issues into the campaign will once again give energy to a very important demand.

The tremendous amount of articles collected by the Clearinghouse should be summed up by those people in the Clearinghouse and sent around the country in order that the small brochure we now have on PVS can be expanded and developed further. This would be of great aid to the campaign against the VA.

STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT & SOLIDARITY:

Because of the recent struggles of G.I. s in Japan, the following two proposals were made:

PROPOSAL: That the National Steering Committee of VVAW/WSO send a letter of solidarity and support to the Iwakuni "5". These five brothers are facing courts-martial as a result of circulating leaflets protesting the Pak regime of South Korea.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance and the letter is to be written by the National GI Project.

PROPOSAL: That the National Steering Committee of VVAW/WSO send a letter of solidarity and support to the Midway Defense Committee offering our support to the brothers who walked off the Midway.

VOTE: This proposal received unanimous acceptance and the letter is to be written by the National GI Project.

STATEMENT ON NIXON & OUR FOUR REMAINING DEMANDS:

(The following statement on Nixon was made and people felt that it should be included in the minutes).

We are now left with four of our original five demands. We should, in our day-to-day work note that the "Kick Nixon Out" demand was satisfied through the unified power of the people of this country, and this is a cause for celebration. Nixon is still a war criminal, which should be mentioned when talking about Indochina, and should be punished for his crimes against the people of the world. The resignation of Nixon is a victory for the people, and we should make every effort to bring this fact home to our communities.

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL COORDINATOR:

Three positions for National Coordinator will be open at the next NSCM. The one-year terms of Ed Damato and Marla Watson will expire in December. Also, the coordinator position which was vacated at this NSCM by Rich Bangert (no one was elected to fill this vacant position) will have to be filled. Nominations for these three positions were taken and the following were nominated:

Walter Klim (Milwaukee, Wis), Barry Romo (Riverside, Calif), Jeanie Dolly (Oakland, Calif), Bill Davis (Columbus, Ohio), Marla Watson (National Office), and Ed Damato (National Office).

PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE DAY:

VVAW/WSO has been asked to endorse and support the Puerto Rican Independence Day demonstration which will be held on October 27th in Madison Square Garden in New York City. The demand for this demonstration is for the independence of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule. Tickets for the rally will cost \$3.00 and people

This PVS proposal was introduced by the Wisconsin/Minnesota region and is to be taken back to the regions for discussion on the future of the PVS Clearinghouse. No vote was taken on this proposal, but regions should be prepared to discuss this proposal at the next NSCM.

INTER-REGION COMMUNICATIONS:

A request and suggestion was made which applies to all regions. Regional coordinators/collectives have commented on the fact that receiving minutes from other regional meetings has been a very helpful thing. Because of this, the suggestion was made that all regions adopt as a policy the consistent sending out of regional meeting minutes to all regional offices, as well as sending them to the National Office. Hopefully, this suggestion can be taken to heart and implemented in the immediate future.

DATE & SITE OF NEXT NSCM:

Two regions volunteered to host the next NSCM: California/Nevada and S. Illinois/E. Missouri. A vote was taken on whether the NSCM should be held in California or St. Louis, and the results were as follows:

California -- 8.6 in favor

St. Louis -- 51.4 in favor

Thus, the next NSCM will be held in St. Louis. The dates selected for this meeting are December 27 - 31 (these dates were selected by a majority consensus). People should note that these dates mean that the registration will begin on a Friday and the meeting will conclude on a Tuesday.

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CRITICISM / SELF - CRITICISM

As at the last several NSCMs, the last item of business was criticism/self-criticism. The following is a compilation of the criticism/self-criticism given by the regional delegations.

1. There was unanimous agreement that the logistics were handled beautifully. A large vote of thanks goes to the Buffalo chapter by the NSC. Another vote of thanks goes to Steve Hassett who chaired most of the meeting; his efficient, firm and fair handling of the chair contributed much to the success of the meeting.

2. The level of political struggle was much higher than it has been in the past. With a few exceptions, the struggle was on a clearly political level, and political lines were clarified. In keeping with this, it was good that a few regions and the National Office had prepared positions ahead of time (though there was criticism of the N.O. for not having completed its position paper sooner) since that gave the discussions a clear focus, whether or not people agreed with the positions being put forth. Clearly, the organization has grown politically.

3. There was criticism of people who let a speaker's organization stand in the way of hearing the position the speaker was putting forth. At the same time, there was positive criticism for the principled and progressive role played by VVAW/WSO members who are also in the Revolutionary Union. Rumor-mongering about the RU was severely criticized; this was particularly noted since RU members were present and ready to deal openly with criticisms of the organization.

4. People felt that the meeting produced excellent results, above and beyond the good political struggle which went on during the meeting. We have a new set of objectives (minus one), and a Program for the next period of time. We also have clarity around the lines about the future of the organization which will serve as a focus of struggle in chapters and regions before the next NSCM.

5. There was criticism of delegates who fell into subjectivity, especially around debate on the gay objective. Also, although the general level of political struggle was high, there was criticism of opportunist tactics, red-baiting, and unprincipled attacks.

6. Regional delegations were criticized for their representation at workshops. In order to "stack" some workshops, delegations ignored other workshops. Too many delegates were completely locked into positions without the flexibility to deal with new information.

7. Workshops were generally seen as productive, but there should have been a workshop which would have discussed the National Program of the organization.

IMPLEMENT THE NATIONAL PROGRAM!

UNITY - STRUGGLE - VICTORY !