



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR/ WINTER SOLDIER ORGANIZATION, INC.

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Dear IPC Members,

The Vietnamese and Cambodians have won great victories. They have fought and beaten the strongest military in the world, bringing freedom and independence to their lands. It was a victory that clearly showed the people of the world that small nations and a unified people can topple the mightiest of aggressors. The Indochinese have waged a mighty battle aided by progressive people and organizations throughout the world. While the Indochinese must continue to wipe out the remnants of colonialism and imperialism and move forward to socialism, we can rejoice with them in a victory that was helped by continuous support of the people of the United States, including organizations such as IPC and VVAW/WSO.

However, we cannot sit back on our laurels and consider our work done. We are engaged in a struggle in the United States aimed ultimately at ending the exploitation and oppression of the American people. The struggle for freedom in Indochina was not easy; nor is that struggle easy in the US. But by integrating ourselves in the day-to-day struggles of the American people, constantly summing up our work and being guided by a correct understanding of the material world in our battles and by moving forward, we too will one day celebrate our victory over US imperialism.

VVAW/WSO was, and is, engaged in such a struggle. The great majority of our organization stands firmly on the side of the working class and has taken up the task of organizing veterans and GIs to fight against the exploitation of the system; a fight that included our support for the people of Indochina in their wars of liberation.

The Indochina Peace Campaign is engaged in such a struggle also. We read with great interest the article in the Michigan Free Press about the IPC National Standing Committee (NSC) meeting, at which you began to earnestly take up the task of summing up your work with your eyes directed toward the future. The article in the Free Press outlined some of the questions that will be discussed internally by your organization. While we have views on the various questions, we will not put them forward here in this letter, but will rather direct our attention to the slanders put forward by your NSC on the nature of the struggle in VVAW/WSO, as was reported in the Free Press.

The article written by George dePue of the Ann Arbor IPC reeked of contempt for the struggle of the Vietnamese and for the role the American people played in building mass support for their fight for liberation in Indochina. He brazenly put forward that it was IPC and the congressional strategy that succeeded in ending the war, rather than the Indochinese people fighting for freedom, along with the support of the great majority of the Americans, among others, who were outraged by the continuing aggression of the US imperialists. This type of conceit and self-gratification is the mark of a pompous movement guru enshrining himself in an ivory tower away from understanding that it is the masses of people who make history.

We can only guess how much this contempt permeates the decisions made at the IPC NSC meeting in attempt to expel the NYC-IPC chapter. The justifications of that 'expulsion' -- "the apparent RU 'capture' of the VVAW/WSO national office and even the creation of puppet VVAW/WSO chapters" is a slanderous attack, based on fiction, to stifle struggle within your organization. VVAW/WSO is a healthy organization, with many chapters around the country, including the Detroit chapter, actively working to build a fighting veterans movement. While it is true that some chapters have left our organization, while others are being disbanded, it is the result of a struggle waged in the organization around how to move the organization forward based on political line. We are a stronger organization now than a year ago, when we had more chapters. The reason this is true is because the organization is looking to the future after summing up our role in the past and by actively working in the day-to-day struggles of veterans and GIs. Our organization is on the threshold of making a major leap in our work. Chapters are firmly rooting themselves in the struggles of the working class, particularly veterans, and our membership is beginning to reflect a real change in the make-up of the organization.

Rather than having hindered our work, as the IPC NSC would have you believe, the members of the Revolutionary Union in our organization have played an active role in helping sum up our work, aiding in the formulation of our national program and implementing it in order to build a fighting veterans movement. The RU has not 'captured' the organization, but instead, plays an important role in its growth and direction. To say anything else is to say that the majority of members of VVAW/WSO are stupid and unable to see the importance of our work in the revolutionary struggle in this country. This is exactly the lie that is put forward by dePue in the Free Press, (May 21st issue). We hope that other members of the IPC NSC aren't so grossly shallow in their understanding of VVAW/WSO. The great majority of our membership has a very high regard for the practice of the Revolutionary Union. What the great majority of our organization has the utmost disdain for are hippies pontificating from their ragsheets, removed from mass struggle, such as dePue.

The vicious and reactionary reasons put forward in the Free Press for expelling the NYC IPC chapter are slanderous and dangerous, and can only serve the interests of our enemy. VVAW/WSO cannot be used as a scapegoat by some individuals who are afraid of political struggle and afraid to engage in mass work aimed at moving forward our struggle against imperialism. We feel it important that the membership of the local IPC chapters understand that these justifications for that expulsion are based on lies. VVAW/WSO is not a shambles, nor is it an organization led by the nose by the RU. It is a healthy, growing organization engaged in building a fighting movement of veterans and GIs to struggle against their oppression and to fight in the interests of the working class.

We hope that the present struggle in the Indochina Peace Campaign can proceed on a principled, political level, free of slanderous lies, with an eye to the future to bring forward the lessons of the victories of the Indochinese peoples and to strike blows at the imperialist system.

In Struggle,

The National Office Collective
VVAW/WSO