



INSIDE / OUT

Same Struggle, Same Fight

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Militant Greetings!

As this newsletter is being written, we are getting word of a takeover of the Statue of Liberty by 15 members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War in New York City. The vets took over the statue at the end of the day on the 9th of June, hanging out a banner saying "Extend and Expand the GI Bill," and talking to the press about the 3.7 million vets who were eliminated from the GI Bill on the 31st of May this year (a story about that GI Bill cutoff is in this issue of The Veteran).

New York City is only one place where vets are moving. As you can see from The Veteran, actions are taking place around the country as veterans unite to fight both for what we need in order to survive--extend and expand the GI Bill, decent benefits, healthcare, single-type discharge--and to build for the Bicentennial Demonstration in Philadelphia where vets will be joining with thousands of other people to demand Jobs or Income Now, and state that We Won't Fight Another Rich Man's War, all under the overall statement WE'VE CARRIED THE RICH FOR 200 YEARS, LET'S GET THEM OFF OUR BACKS!

And, in some places, vets are also getting together in prisons. The following comes from a letter written by a brother in prison in Michigan:

"We've had some decent raps on why vets should unite and all that I've talked with are in favor of peer association and a suitable program for meeting to discuss veterans affairs. It's obvious that the administration wants separation, especially where ethnic groups are concerned, but a vets organization with ethnic participation under the common bond of "veteran" is quite appealing to all. "Off and running again!!!" Lots of good brothers here and the word is spreading. As soon as we gain enough support here, we'll set up an outreach to many vets at the farms. Exploitation and involuntary servitude seem to be the best words to describe this whole scene. I guess the bastards think they can keep on using us till we die. The best system we've come up with thus far is: educate, organize, and agitate."

VVAW sends special greetings to vets getting it together in prison in Michigan and wherever veterans and others are uniting to fight back for the changes that we all need.

In Solidarity,

The VVAW National
Office

(The following article concerning FBI attacks on the Black Panthers is reprinted from the monthly paper Revolution, organ of the central committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party. In Chicago, the families of Fred Hampton and Mark Clark are suing the FBI; the trial has been going on for months, but needless to say, no matter what the decision in the trial, the FBI is not going to change its method of operation. For VVAW which has been consistently infiltrated, harrassed and generally hassled by the FBI--including conversations with brothers in prison who get VVAW publications through the mail--the article and its analysis has special relevance.)

The capitalists are past masters of trying to turn a loss into a profit, a setback into an advance. This has been particularly clear throughout the whole Watergate and "post Watergate" period. Every exposure of the corruption and brutality of their rule is claimed as a victory for "reform." Every act of violence and repression forced into the light is cited as an example of the freedom of speech and criticism that flourishes under capitalist democracy.

The latest releases from the congressional investigative committees on the FBI's campaigns of sabotage and murder against the Black Panther Party is more of the same. FBI director Clarence Kelley blandly steps to the microphone to the praise and applause of the whole bourgeois press and "apologizes" for the excesses of the FBI "in the twilight years" of the Hoover reign. "We are truly sorry we were responsible for instances which now are subject to criticism. We need to make it clearly understood that we recognize errors and have learned from them...(But) many of the activities being condemned were, considering the time in which they occurred--the violence of the '60s--good faith efforts to prevent bloodshed and wanton destruction of property."

And after acknowledging that there is criticism and saying how sorry they are that this criticism has arisen, the whole bourgeoisie makes it obvious that as far as they are concerned, nothing is going to change. They might even set up a few "watchdog committees" to legitimize anew the job of the FBI and other police agencies to prevent "wanton destruction" of their property and especially their precious profit system.

Scare Tactics

But there is also another aspect to these exposures about the FBI. The capitalists are trying to warn us that anyone who threatens their rule will meet the same fate as Fred Hampton and other members of the Panthers. Through their sneering lips they say "Oh we're so sorry!" While what they really are saying is "Look how powerful we are. We are everywhere, any effort to organize resistance to us will be infiltrated, sabotaged and met with violent repression. We are invincible! So give up. Submit!"

The Panther Party was destroyed as a revolutionary force. But it was more by the sugar coated bullets of bribery and bourgeois ideas that saturated their top leadership than the lead bullets that killed Fred Hampton and Mark Clark and many other heroic Panther Party members and sympathizers.

In fact it was at the time when the Panthers were under the greatest attack that they made the greatest contribution to the development of the revolutionary

mass movement in this country. Their armed resistance to police repression was like an electric shock and caused their influence to be spread throughout the land. The more the capitalists attacked, the more the Panthers resisted, the greater and broader their support became among people all over the country.

In Los Angeles and New Orleans Panthers stood up to massive armed attack by the police and fought them to a standstill through their own actions and the actions of the masses. Many hundreds of people came out in the heat of the police attacks to give them whatever support possible, while many more showed support in other ways.

These attacks and the vileness of the FBI activities (an FBI informer made sure that Fred Hampton had taken several tranquilizers and would be sleeping when the cops launched their attack on the Panther apartment in Chicago) certainly demonstrate the viciousness of the capitalists' rule. But far from proving their invincibility, it shows their vulnerability.

The ruling class was threatened by the Black Panther Party, a relatively small group. And they were terrified by the revolutionary potential of the masses which the Panthers represented and organized, in at least a partial way. They feared that their actions might ignite massive and organized rebellion among Black people and others.

Despite all their arms and guards, their police, FBI, etc., they are vulnerable to the action of the broad masses of people united under revolutionary leadership. The exploitation and oppression which are the daily experience of millions of people are like dry tinder that can explode into a raging fire. That fire will consume the capitalists and their system if people are organized in struggle and learn in struggle the nature of their oppressor and how he can be overthrown.

The whole police apparatus of the United States and other capitalist countries is geared to prevent this development of organized, conscious, mass activity against the capitalist class. But they can't. Just as inevitably as the capitalist system is sinking into deeper crisis and decay, the struggle of the masses of people is intensifying. The enemy does have power. They can kill off, arrest, or even bribe and corrupt some of the leadership of this struggle at any given time, as they did with the Panthers, or with the old communist party.

But they cannot eliminate this struggle of the masses. And in the face of this, the vicious actions of the capitalists are ultimately weak. Repression does not breed submission. It breeds resistance. And new upsurges in the struggle of the masses, together with growing understanding, brings forth new leadership from out of these struggles. ■